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TOP 10

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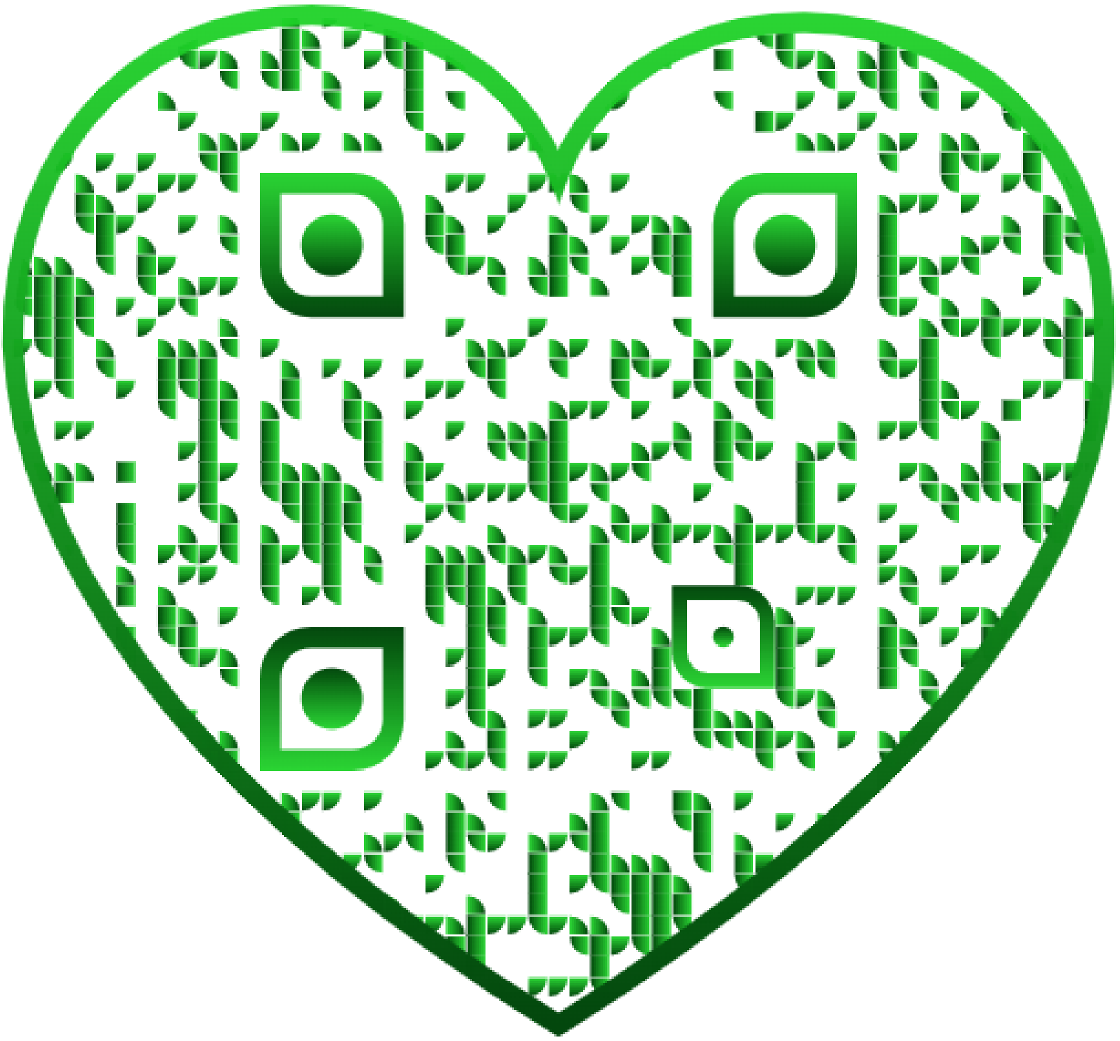

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DESIGN MEETING GENIUS: AI FOR GOOD AND COMPETITION

This month's edition is all about design genius meeting innovation.

From Start Campus proving you can power AI without destroying the planet, to legendary designer Sir Jony Ive joining OpenAI – these changes clearly set out where this industry is heading.

Also inside, Nokia's Azfar Aslam grounds us with what AI should be doing for businesses, while Boomi prepares us for the AI agent era.

Initially, AI seemed to be about making our lives easier, then it was about ROI. Now a more human phase is approaching – focused on using AI for the planet, innovation and beauty.

Enjoy this edition's stories about AI's light and dark sides, from its ability to cause fierce competition to its potential to make the world a better place.

Kitty Wheeler

KITTY WHEELER

CONTACT ME

AI
TOP 10
THE AI POWERLIST

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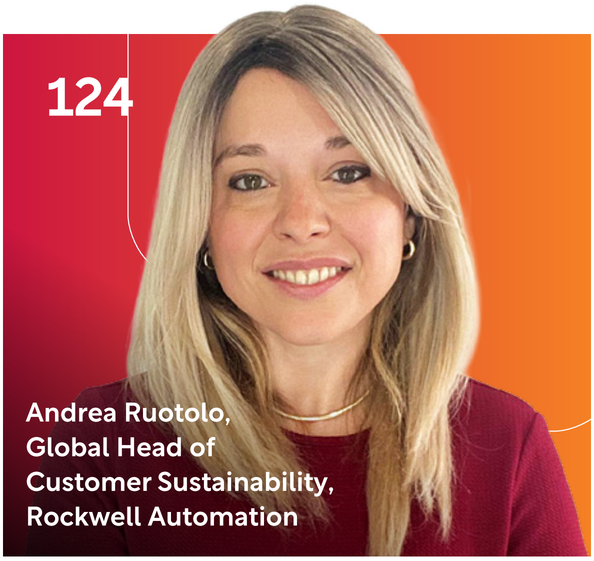
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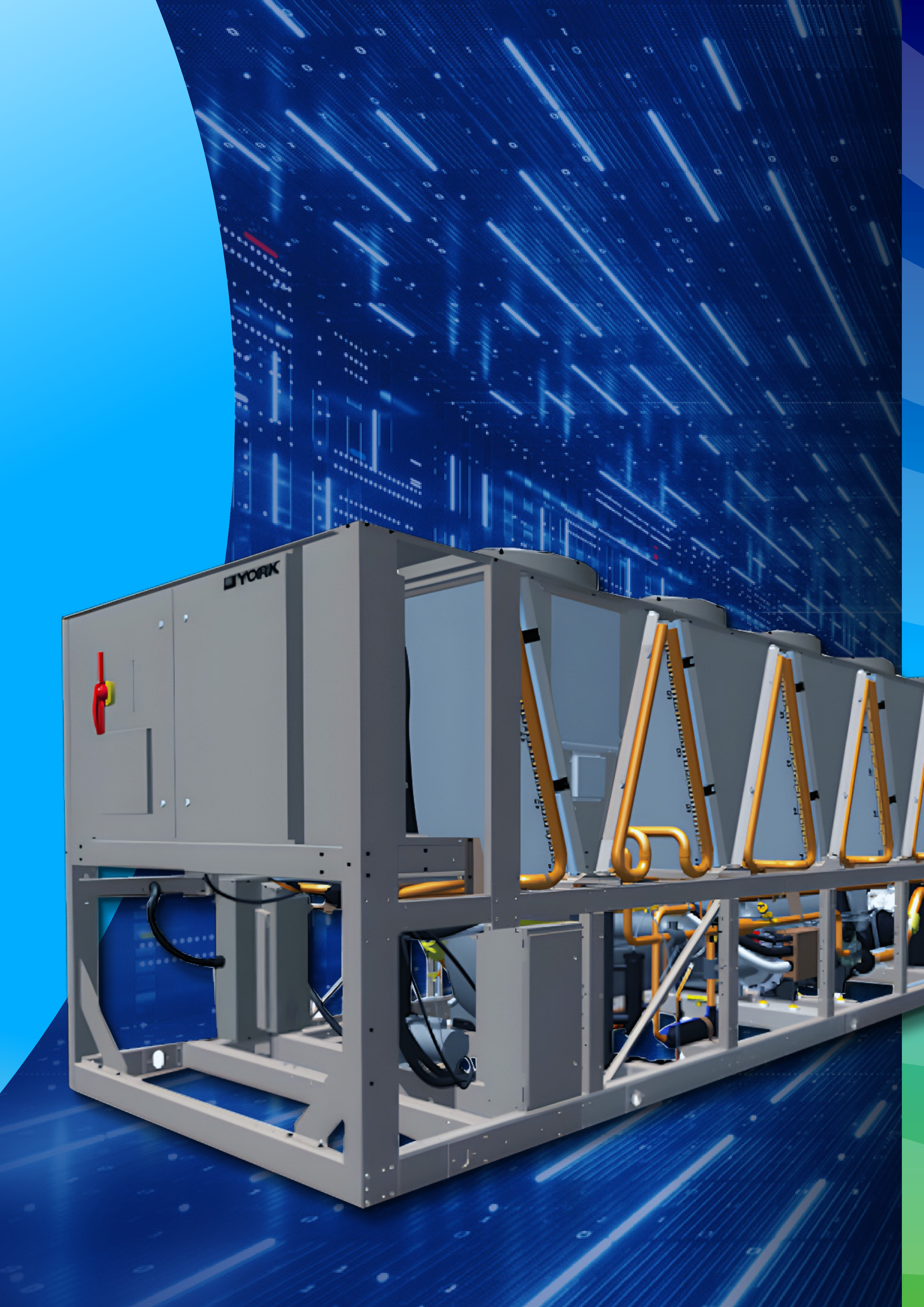
Johnson Controls

How JCI Supports DC Blox with Unique Cooling Technology

JCI Sales Engineer Charles Casey explains how the company's sustainable magnetic bearing chillers support DC BLOX data centres in becoming more efficient

Learn more


YORK

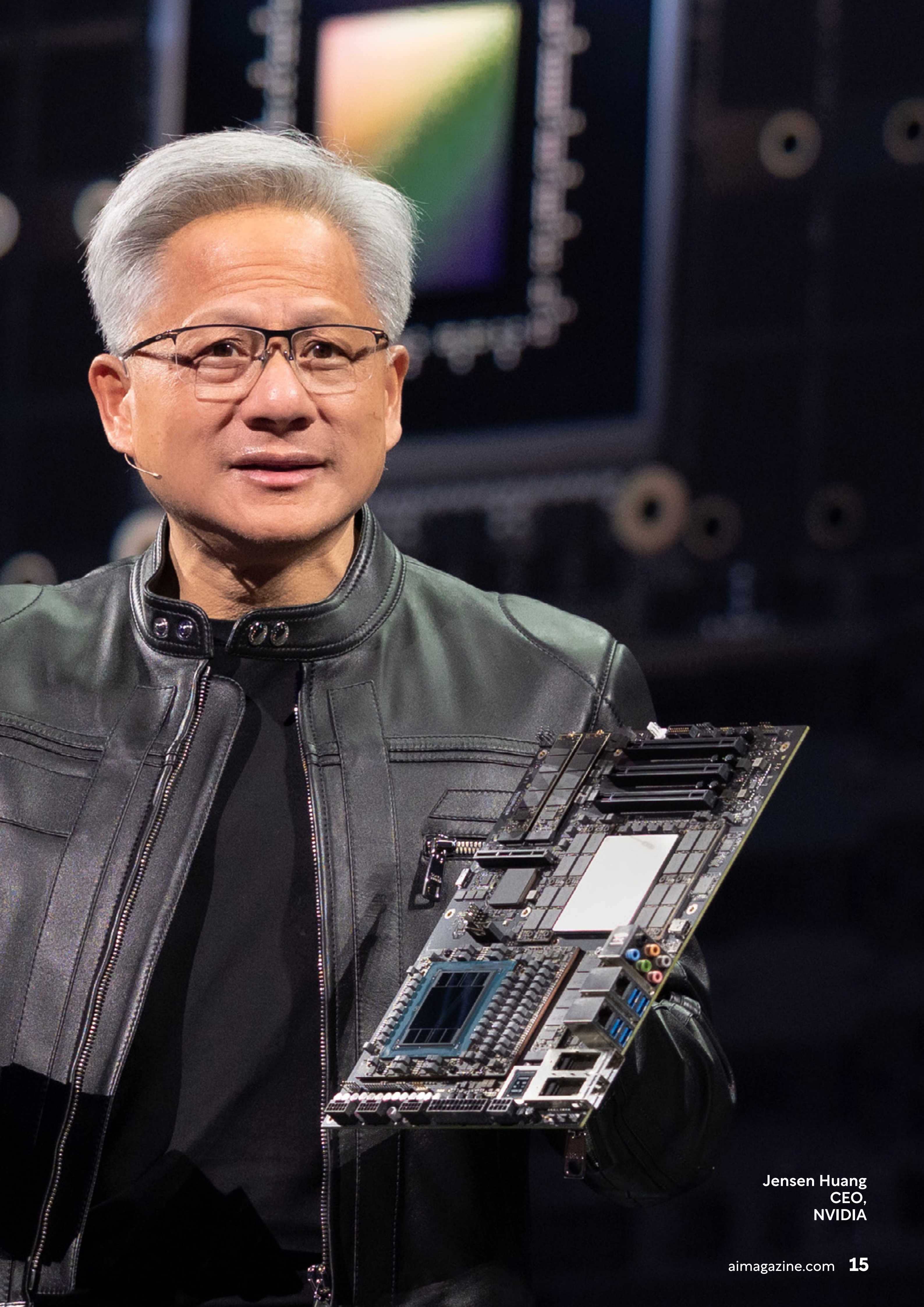
BIG PICTURE

NVIDIA'S AI INNOVATION ANNOUNCEMENTS AT COMPUTEX 2025

Nvidia is the beating heart of the AI industry. Once known for its gaming graphics cards, it now dominates the AI market as king of AI computing hardware.

There is no AI without hardware – and now heating up business competition across the world by accelerating AI design in ways never done before – the company's meteoric rise is mirroring the explosive growth of AI itself.

At Taiwan's annual Computex technology conference in Taipei, the largest computing-focused trade show in Asia, Nvidia announces the next generation of AI technologies under this year's theme: AI Next.



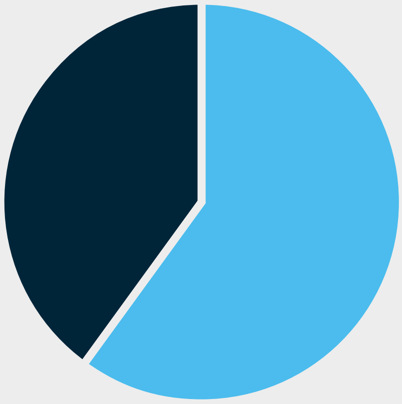
Jensen Huang
CEO,
NVIDIA

AI IN NUMBERS

100%

Microsoft reports that 100% of its enterprise AI projects in 2024 were required to undergo a responsible AI review – and the company's Responsible AI Standard is now used as a template by over 50 Fortune 500 companies

(Microsoft Responsible AI Transparency Report, 2024)



Over 60% of Americans are concerned about bias and discrimination in AI-assisted hiring

(Hostinger, AI Statistics and Trends 2025)

80%

By 2026, 80% of large enterprises will have formal AI ethics policies in place, up from just 20% in 2021

(Gartner, Predicts 2025: AI Ethics and Society)

38%

38% of UK businesses cite privacy and data security as their top concern with workplace AI, while 37% cite ethical implications and potential misuse

(Forbes UK Artificial Intelligence Statistics 2025)

US$1.42bn

The global AI governance market is projected to grow from US$227.6m in 2024 to US$1.42bn by 2030

(MarketsandMarkets, AI Governance Market Forecast 2025)

OpenAI

OpenAI's expanded Model Specification, released in 2025, grew from 10 to 63 pages, reflecting a major industry shift toward more detailed and transparent ethical AI guidelines for developers and businesses

(OpenAI, Quantilus 2025)

PEOPLE MO

AI Magazine runs down of the latest executive appointments across the world from Meta's new superintelligence team to AI roles in the financial sector

WRITTEN BY: KITTY WHEELER

ALEXANDR WANG

JOB FROM: **CEO AT SCALE AI**

JOB TO: **BOARD DIRECTOR AT SCALE AI AND LEADER OF META'S SUPERINTELLIGENCE LAB**

Scale AI Founder Alexandr Wang is joining Meta's superintelligence group in what is set to become Meta's largest external investment to date.

Scale AI supplies human-labelled training data that enables autonomous vehicles to recognise pedestrians and helps large language models understand complex scenarios.

Alexandr's extensive network includes relationships with OpenAI chief executive Sam Altman, his former MIT roommate and connections throughout Silicon Valley's AI ecosystem.

> **"Our nation's ability to efficiently adopt and implement AI will define the future of warfare"**

OVES

Alexandr Wang,
Board Director,
Scale AI

Jean-Didier Allegrucci, VP, AI SoC Engineering, Intel

Kasper Tjørntved Davidsen, CAIO & Head of Gen AI, Danske Bank

PEOPLE MO

JEAN-DIDIER ALLEGRUCCI

JOB FROM: **HEAD OF HARDWARE ENGINEERING AT RAIN AI**

JOB TO: **VP OF AI SYSTEM ON CHIP ENGINEERING AT INTEL**

Intel has appointed Jean-Didier Allegrucci as Vice President of AI System on Chip Engineering, recruiting him from Rain AI where he led AI silicon engineering efforts.

The appointment forms part of Intel CEO Lip-Bu Tan's strategy to rebuild the chipmaker's technical capabilities amid fierce competition in AI semiconductors.

KASPER TJØRNTVED DAVIDSEN

JOB FROM: **CIO AT TOPDANMARK**

JOB TO: **CAIO AND HEAD OF GEN AI AT DANSKE BANK**

Kasper Tjørntved Davidsen has joined Danske Bank as CAIO and Head of Gen AI from Topdanmark, where he led implementation of TopGPT, Denmark's first customer-facing Gen AI solution in financial services.

His experience spans CTO roles at Nets Group and VP positions at KMD, driving large-scale digital transformations.

Dr Maja Pantic, Chief AI Research Officer, Natwest

OVES

DR MAJA PANTIC

JOB FROM: **DIRECTOR OF GEN AI RESEARCH AT META**

JOB TO: **CHIEF AI RESEARCH OFFICER AT NATWEST**

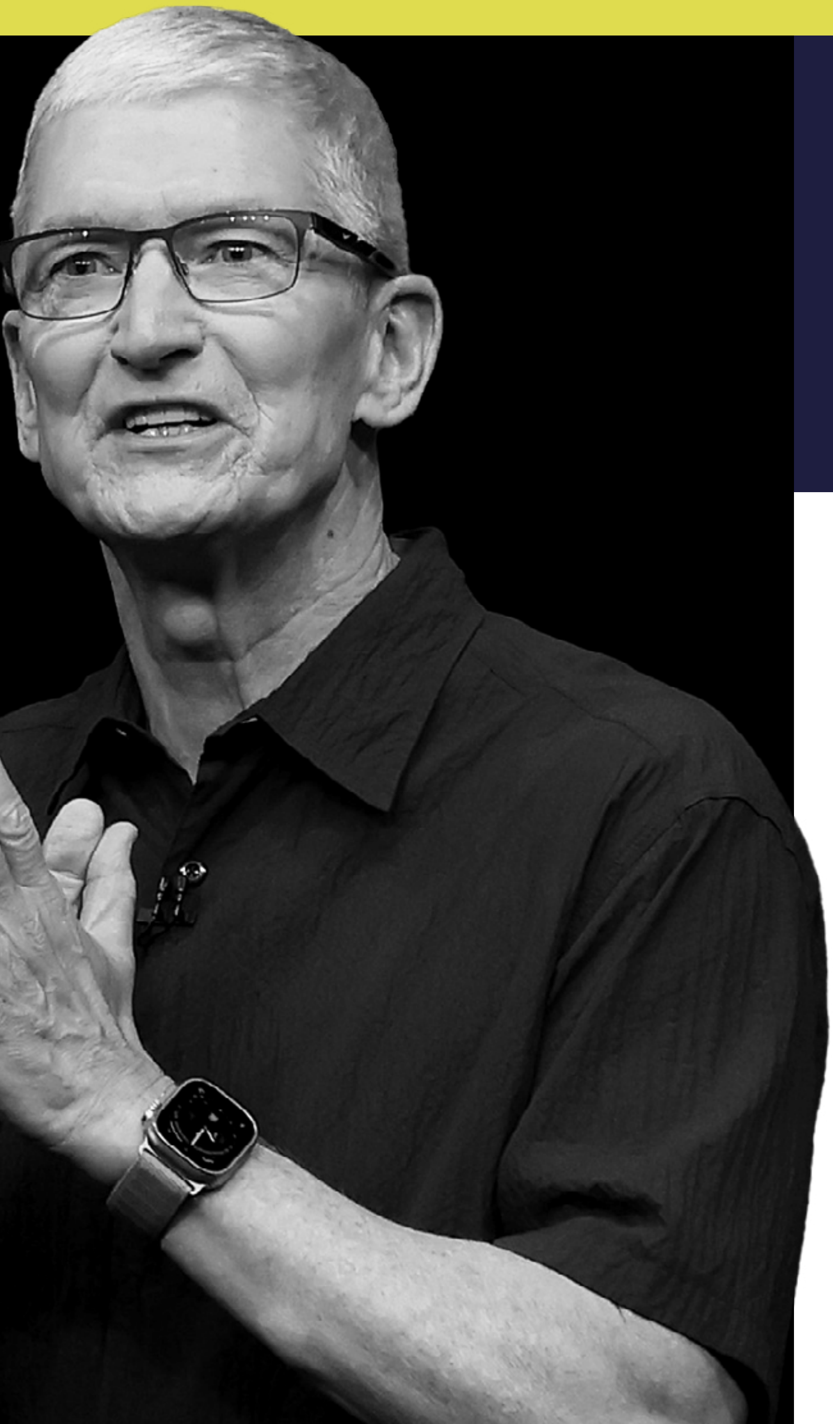
Dr Maja Pantic joins NatWest as its first Chief AI Research Officer from being the Director of Gen AI Research at Meta.

Previously Founding Research Director at Samsung AI Centre Cambridge and AI Scientific Research Director at Meta, she's published over 150 papers in emotion recognition and human-centred AI.

TOP 10

AI
CON

MPANIES



From breakthrough research to real-world applications, AI Magazine highlights the Top 10 AI Companies in 2025 defining the future of the technology

WRITTEN BY: **MARCUS LAW**

The AI industry has reached unprecedented maturity in 2025, with companies across sectors integrating AI capabilities into everything from healthcare diagnostics to autonomous systems.

As competition intensifies, a select group of organisations has emerged as clear leaders, distinguished by their technological breakthroughs, market impact and ability to scale AI solutions globally. These companies are not just advancing the field through research and development, but are actively shaping how AI transforms industries and society.

This month, AI Magazine highlights the top 10 AI companies in the world in 2025.

10

Ali Ghodsi,
CEO,
Databricks

DATABRICKS

EMPLOYEES: **11,000**
CEO: **ALI GHODSI**
FOUNDED: **2013**

Databricks has emerged as the fastest-growing major enterprise software company, achieving 60% year-over-year growth through its unified data and AI platform that serves over 10,000 enterprise customers. Ali Ghodsi's leadership has positioned the company at the critical intersection of data analytics and AI, with its lakehouse architecture becoming the standard for AI-powered data processing. Databricks' Mosaic AI platform and partnerships with major cloud providers enable organisations to build, deploy and manage AI applications at scale.

databricks

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Empowering business users
with Databricks AI/BI

09

PALANTIR TECHNOLOGIES

EMPLOYEES: **3,700**
CEO: **ALEX KARP**
FOUNDED: **2003**

Palantir has achieved remarkable success as the leading AI platform for government and enterprise decision-making, with its AI platform driving 36% revenue growth and S&P 500 inclusion. The company's focus on AI-powered data analysis and decision support systems has proven invaluable for defence agencies, intelligence services and large enterprises. The company's success in both government and commercial sectors, combined with its specialised AI capabilities for complex decision-making, has established it as an essential player in the practical application of AI technology.

Alex Karp,
CEO,
Palantir
Technologies

Palantir

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Palantir CEO Alex Karp
opening remarks – AIPCon 7

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Kalzen Gaming's Security Strategy Enabling Global Expansion
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Event Services
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Content & Video
Content that connects with our highly **engaged audience**

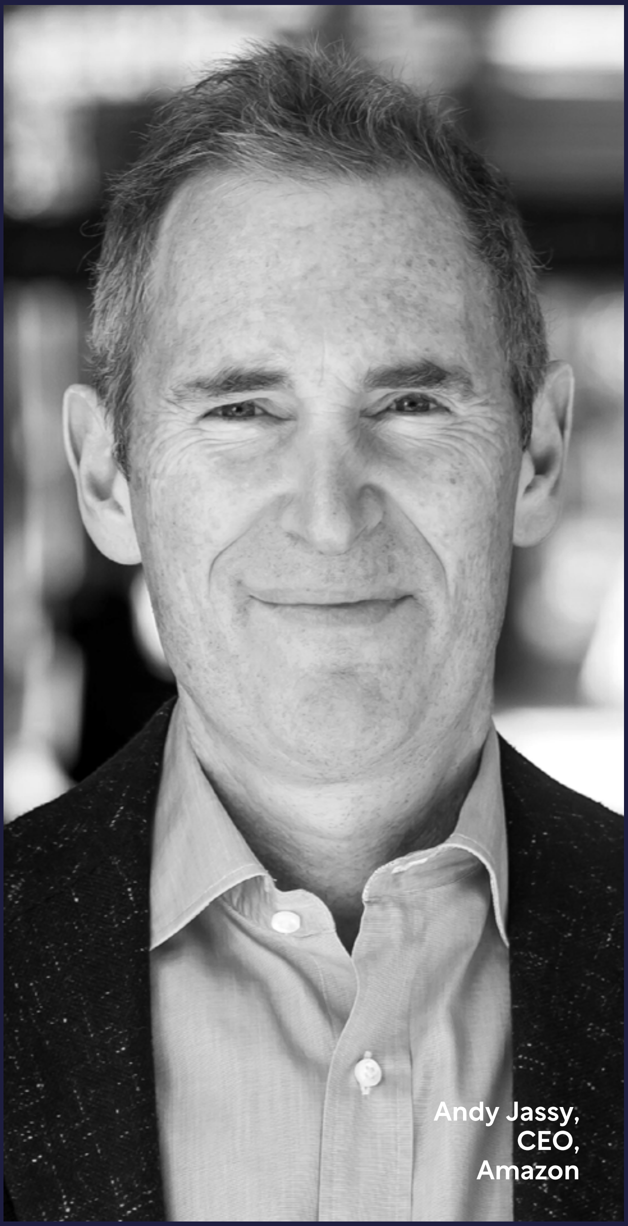
Data & Demand Generation
Powerful Data **Driving Demand** Generation for Marketing ROI

08

AMAZON

EMPLOYEES: **1,556,000**
CEO: **ANDY JASSY**
FOUNDED: **1994**

Amazon dominates AI infrastructure through AWS, the world's largest cloud platform, while its proprietary Amazon Nova models and Bedrock service provide comprehensive AI capabilities. Today, AWS is the backbone for countless AI companies, with AI-related services achieving triple-digit year-over-year growth and multi-billion-dollar annual revenue. Amazon's unique advantage lies in its integration of AI across e-commerce, logistics, and cloud services, creating a comprehensive ecosystem that serves both consumers and enterprises.


Andy Jassy, CEO, Amazon

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Meet Alexa+, our next-generation AI assistant

07

ANTHROPIC

EMPLOYEES: **1,035**
CEO: **DARIO AMODEI**
FOUNDED: **2021**

Anthropic has established itself as the premier enterprise AI company through its Claude family of LLMs, achieving remarkable 1,000% year-over-year growth to reach US$3bn in annual recurring revenue. Anthropic's collaboration with major cloud providers like AWS and Palantir demonstrates its strategic positioning in the enterprise market, while the company's commitment to AI safety research – combined with its practical enterprise applications – establishes it as OpenAI's primary competitor whilst maintaining distinct advantages in regulated industries and government applications.

Dario Amodei,
CEO,
Anthropic

ANTHROP\C

WATCH NOW

The Model Context Protocol (MCP)

06

META PLATFORMS

EMPLOYEES: **74,067**
CEO: **MARK ZUCKERBERG**
FOUNDED: **2004**

Meta has emerged as the champion of open-source AI through its Llama model family, democratising access to advanced AI capabilities whilst serving 3.4+ billion users across its platforms. Meta's open-source approach has created a powerful ecosystem of developers and researchers, challenging the closed-model strategies of OpenAI and Google. Meta AI's integration across Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp delivers AI capabilities to billions of users daily, whilst the company's Reality Labs division pioneers AI applications in virtual and augmented reality.

Mark Zuckerberg,
CEO,
Meta

Meta

WATCH NOW
Welcome to LlamaCon
2025 – Opening Session

05

CREDIT: JUSTIN SULLIVAN VIA GETTY

Sam Altman,
CEO,
OpenAI

OPENAI

EMPLOYEES: **3,500**
CEO: **SAM ALTMAN**
FOUNDED: **2015**

The defining company of the generative AI era, OpenAI's ChatGPT today serves over 500 million weekly active users, having transformed the company from a research laboratory into the world's most valuable private AI company. OpenAI's GPT models power countless applications across industries, whilst its API services enable developers worldwide to build AI-powered solutions. The company's ambitious goal of achieving artificial general intelligence, combined with its first-mover advantage in consumer AI, positions it as the most influential pure-play AI company globally.

OpenAI

WATCH NOW

Sam Altman on AGI, GPT-5, and what's next – the OpenAI Podcast Ep. 1

04

ALPHABET INC. (GOOGLE)

EMPLOYEES: **183,323**
CEO: **SUNDAR PICHAI**
FOUNDED: **1998**

Google remains the AI research powerhouse through its DeepMind division and comprehensive Gemini AI platform, which serves over 1.5 billion users monthly through AI-powered search overviews. CEO Sundar Pichai's leadership has integrated AI across the company's ecosystem, from Workspace applications generating more than two billion monthly AI assists to advanced cloud services via Vertex AI. Google's strength lies in its combination of fundamental AI research capabilities, massive user base and dominant search platform, which provides unparalleled data advantages.

Alphabet

WATCH NOW
Meet Gemini in Chrome

CREDIT: JUSTIN SULLIVAN VIA GETTY

Sundar Pichai,
CEO,
Alphabet Inc.

03

APPLE

EMPLOYEES: **164,000**
CEO: **TIM COOK**
FOUNDED: **1976**

A relatively late arrival to the AI space, Apple leads the industry in privacy-focused, on-device AI through its Apple Intelligence system and custom silicon architecture. The company's Neural Engine, integrated across M-series and A-series chips, enables sophisticated AI processing without compromising user privacy.

With over 1.5 billion active devices, Apple's AI ecosystem reaches more consumers than any other technology company, making it the most influential platform for mainstream AI adoption whilst maintaining its premium market position.

WATCH NOW
Hands on with
Apple Intelligence

Tim Cook,
CEO,
Apple

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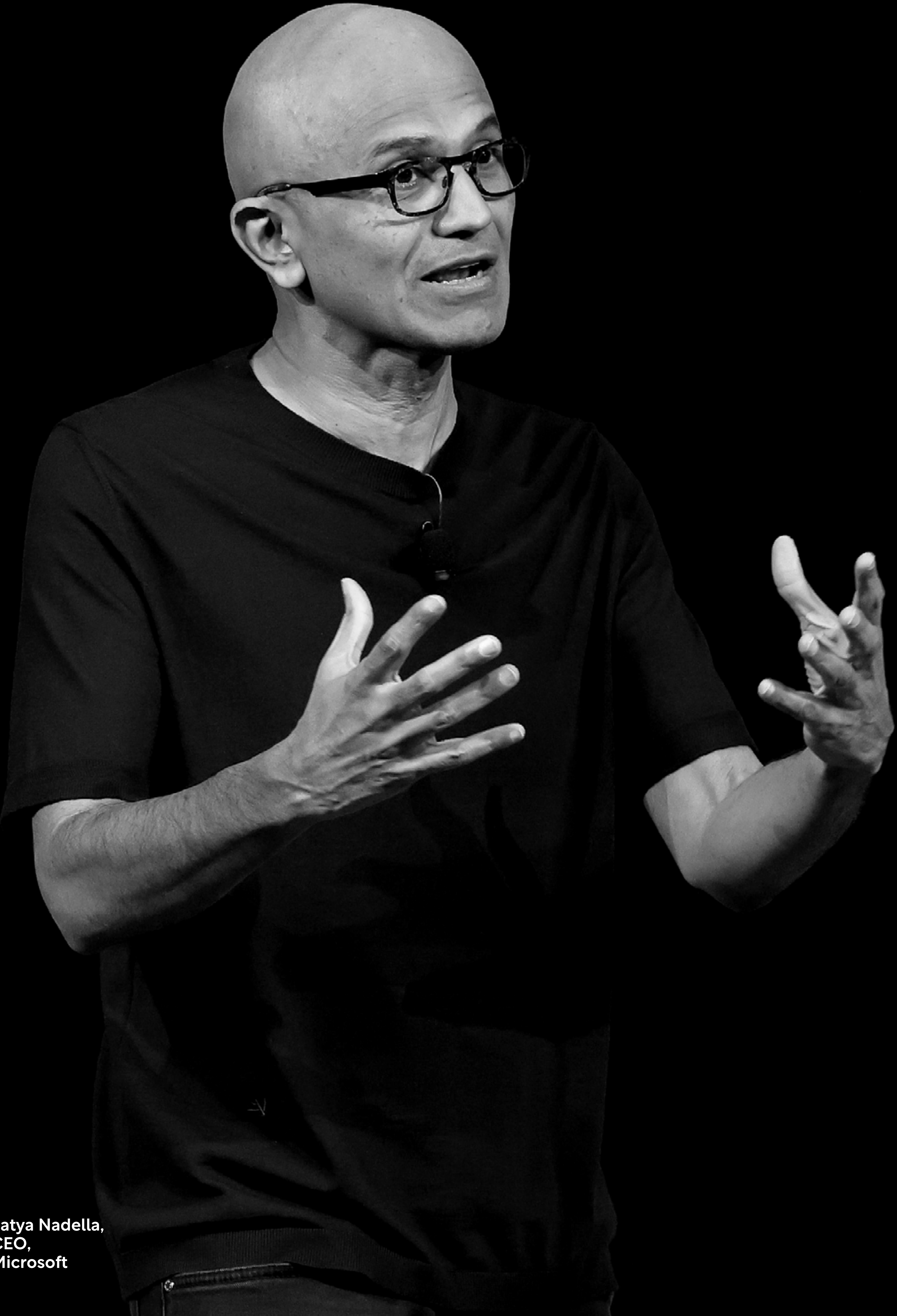

Satya Nadella,
CEO,
Microsoft

CREDIT: JUSTIN SULLIVAN VIA GETTY

02

MICROSOFT

EMPLOYEES: **228,000**
CEO: **SATYA NADELLA**
FOUNDED: **1975**

Microsoft has emerged as the enterprise AI leader through its strategic multi-billion dollar investment in OpenAI and comprehensive Azure AI platform. The company's Copilot suite has revolutionised productivity across Office applications, whilst Azure OpenAI Service provides enterprise-grade access to cutting-edge AI models.

Under Satya Nadella's leadership, Microsoft has achieved remarkable AI business growth, with AI-related revenue exceeding US$13bn annually and evidenced by its US$80bn investment in AI-enabled data centres for 2025.

Microsoft's integration of AI across its entire ecosystem – from productivity tools to cloud services – means it is the definitive platform for enterprise AI adoption, competing directly with cloud rivals Google and Amazon.

Microsoft

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01

NVIDIA

EMPLOYEES: **36,000**
CEO: **JENSEN HUANG**
FOUNDED: **1993**

Nvidia currently holds approximately 92% of the data centre GPU market, positioning the company as a primary supplier for AI infrastructure development, with the firm's H100 and newer Blackwell architecture processors widely deployed in major AI model training operations globally.

Since 1993, Nvidia has transitioned from gaming graphics to become a significant player in enterprise AI computing. The company's CUDA software platform has established technical integration across the AI development community,creating substantial switching costs for developers who have built applications around the ecosystem.

Beyond hardware, Nvidia produces DGX systems and runs the Omniverse platform for enterprise applications, but the company now faces potential competition from custom chips being developed by major cloud providers.

**TO READ MORE TOP 10s,
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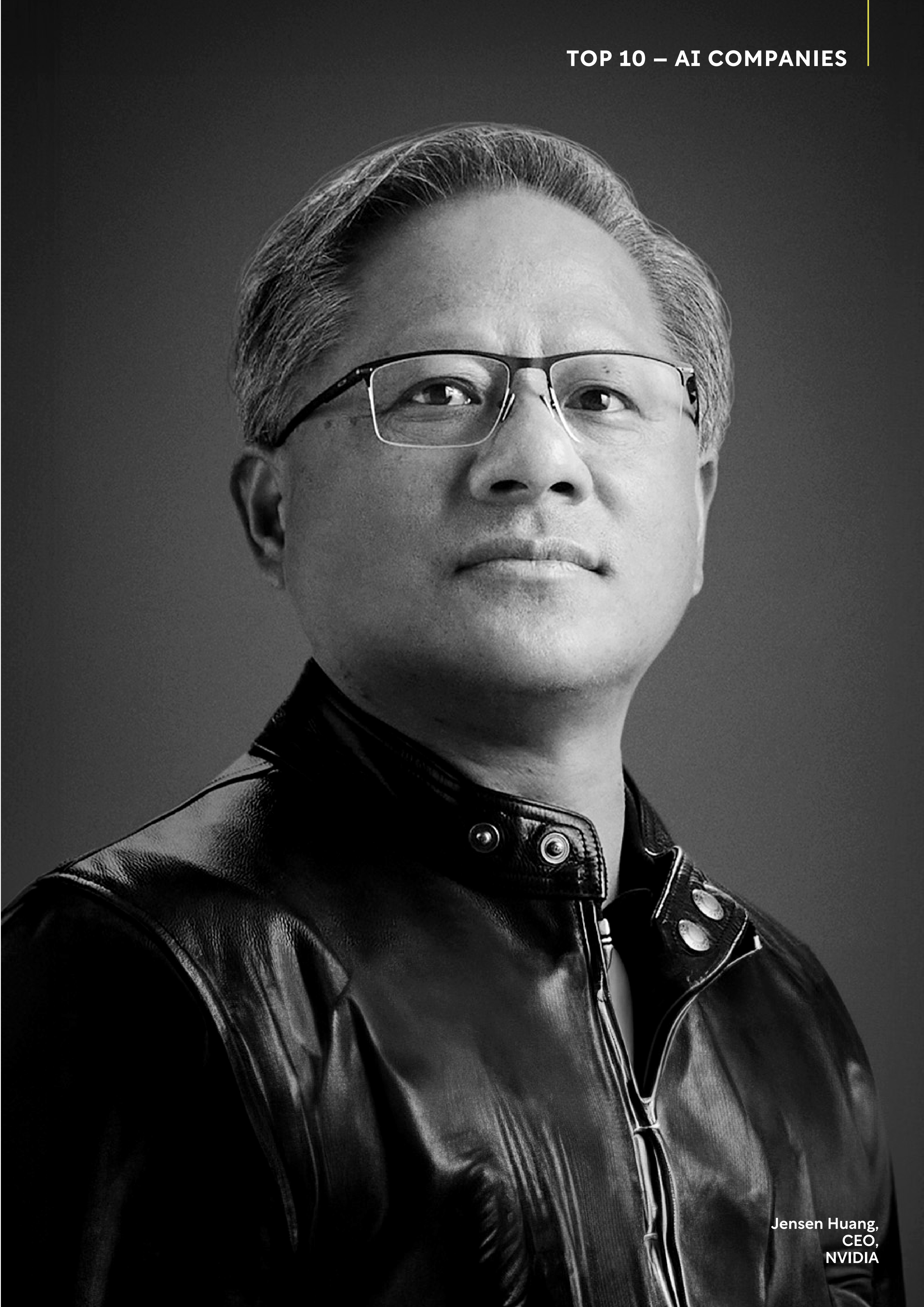
NVIDIA NVLink Fusion –
Building Semi-Custom
AI Infrastructure



Jensen Huang,
CEO,
NVIDIA

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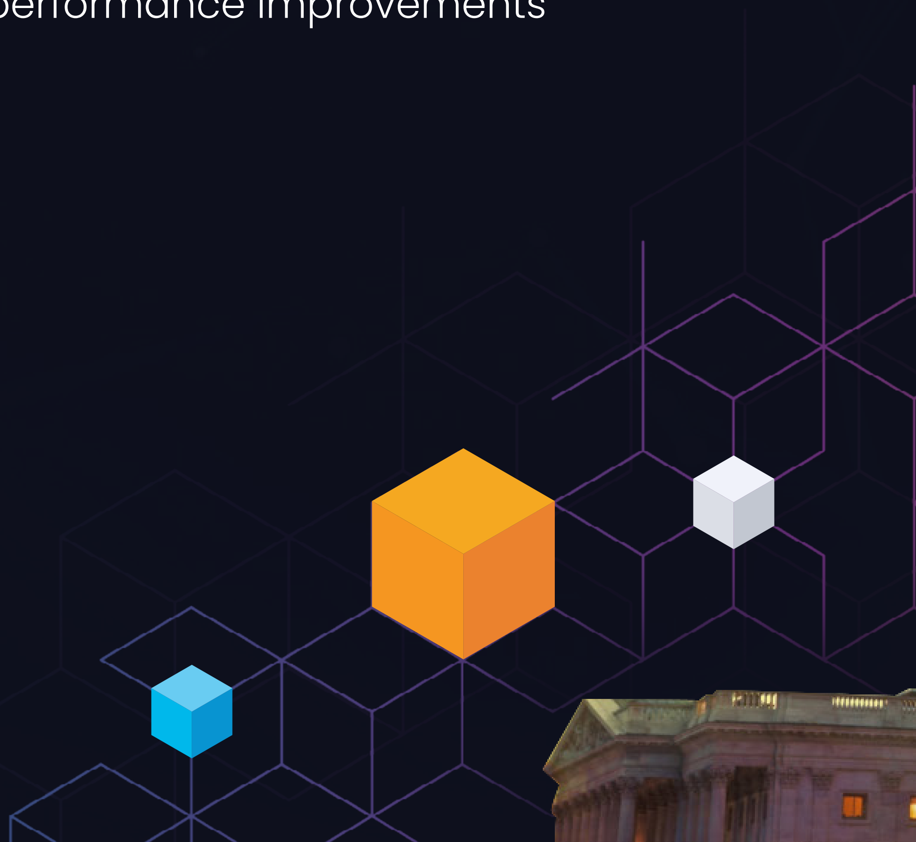

NOKIA

AZFA
ASLA

Nokia VP & CTO Europe **Azfar Aslam** on technology transformation, the importance of solving real business problems and why value underpins AI application

WRITTEN BY: MATT HIGH

Azfar Aslam,
VP & CTO
Europe,
Nokia

If ChatGPT could create an AI and transformation expert – and it's had a fair crack at creating every other person, role and doll in recent months – it may well come up with Azfar Aslam. Fascination with how technology works from a young age? Check. Focused on using innovative solutions to solve real enterprise problems? Check. A unique understanding of the need to seek business value in technology deployment? You get the idea.

Add in the small matter of disrupting a US$50bn-a-year industry as part of a pioneering team at Lucent Technologies and you have a senior leader uniquely placed to discuss the meteoric rise of enterprise and industry AI, as well as the best practices needed to extract tangible value.

Today, Azfar applies this experience to driving business, technology and operational transformations across telecoms, cloud and other industries at Nokia, where he holds the role of Vice President & Chief Technology Officer Europe. He previously worked as Vice President & Senior Partner at Nokia's R&D-focused Bell Labs, leading the consulting business, driving innovation, business and operations, while advising CXOs across industries including telecoms, cloud, energy, transport and defence.

Transforming with maximum value

In an enterprise environment defined by disruption and rapid technology evolution, Azfar's role is to steer clients through challenges by focusing on

AZFAR ASLAM

TITLE: VICE PRESIDENT & CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, EUROPE

COMPANY: NOKIA

INDUSTRY: TECHNOLOGY

Azfar is the Vice President & Chief Technology Officer at Nokia Europe. He has worked at Nokia for almost 11 years, starting out as a partner at its industrial research lab, Bell Labs.

> **“START BY CONSIDERING THE REAL BUSINESS PROBLEM TO SOLVE, AND ALSO ASK WHETHER IT’S WORTH SOLVING”**

AZFAR ASLAM,
VICE PRESIDENT & CHIEF
TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, EUROPE,
NOKIA

problem solving and meaningful, value-driven paths to adopting new innovations.

“At Nokia, we work with many of the largest industries around the world,” he says. “I sit between product and customers, helping those we work with to evolve their infrastructure in the right way. There’s ongoing disruption, whether it’s technology, regulatory, competition and more. I work with C-level leaders and boards globally, and my role is about guiding them through changes, preparing them for what’s around the corner and ensuring they’re using the latest technologies to transform in a way that delivers maximum value.”

This approach – often neglected in a world where the latest innovations and tools are implemented at lightning speed – is crucial for AI adoption, says Azfar, reflecting on key lessons learned early in his career.

“Never get a techie to present an investment case,” he says, remembering feedback given after delivering an

Nokia Campus in Espoo, Finland

investment pitch for a tech startup while at London Business School. “It was a life-changing moment, where I learned the importance of being more balanced between technology and value/ROI. You can push a new technology or tool in a business – as is happening with AI – but where’s the impact, the business value or the outcome? I’ve never forgotten that.”

This approach was crucial to a pioneering AI project in 2014, while Azfar was working at Alcatel-Lucent. “I was meeting with the CEO of a telecoms operator in northern Europe around the time the industry had gone through a big data and data science revolution,” he explains. “They asked: ‘given all the data we now have, how do we find a way to optimise investment, reduce CAPEX and OPEX, improve yield and provide better services?’.

“It was a very direct question and a real problem that needed solving, not in terms of a technical solution but an approach that would drive operations and strategic growth for the business,”

NOKIA
At Nokia, we create technology that helps the world act together.
Nokia
BOSS
NOKIA

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Nokia Bell Labs celebrates 100 years of innovation

says Azfar. “We knew we had the data and the data science, and machine learning capabilities were maturing, so the focus was on how we could take data from operations, networks and infrastructure to understand investment priorities based on real, measurable information.

“The notion of prioritising investment was a big aha moment for the entire industry,” he adds. “It suddenly moved everyone from a mindset of ‘let’s invest everywhere’ to ‘let’s use intelligence to prioritise customers, domains, services or areas very effectively to achieve a better ROI’. We ultimately created the world’s first AI capability for taking that data and using it to inform investment strategy in the telecommunications industry.”

After a period of trialling, testing and development with Bell Labs’ research teams (Nokia ultimately acquired Alcatel-Lucent in 2016), largely to build trust and confidence in then-fledgling AI technologies, the technology was ready. “We knew we were sitting on some very powerful capabilities,” Azfar recalls. “There was a journey of transition into adoption but, by the time I left the organisation, 20 or 30 customers worldwide had started implementing those AI capabilities.”

How are you operationalising AI?

AI adoption is continuing at pace across all industries and sectors. According to McKinsey’s Global State of AI Survey, for example, more than 75% of organisations now use AI in at least one business function.

NOKIA: SIX PILLARS FOR RESPONSIBLE AI ADOPTION

1. **Fairness**
2. **Reliability, safety and security**
3. **Privacy**
4. **Transparency**
5. **Sustainability**
6. **Accountability**

The consulting firm also found that as many as 88% of large enterprises are undergoing an AI transformation.

However, sit that impressive growth next to research from Accenture that finds 76% of C-suite execs admit to struggling to scale AI beyond pilot projects, and Azfar’s focus on value and tangible outcomes remain as pertinent as ever.

“You have to be pragmatic,” he says. “Start by considering the real business problem to solve, and also ask whether it’s worth solving. Are you creating new products and services to generate revenues, or are you applying automation to help reduce CAPEX? Whatever area you’re focused on, you need to ask if the problem can be solved – all technologies have their limitations, after all. If you don’t put AI or any other tech through the business processes, it just ends up as an R&D project.

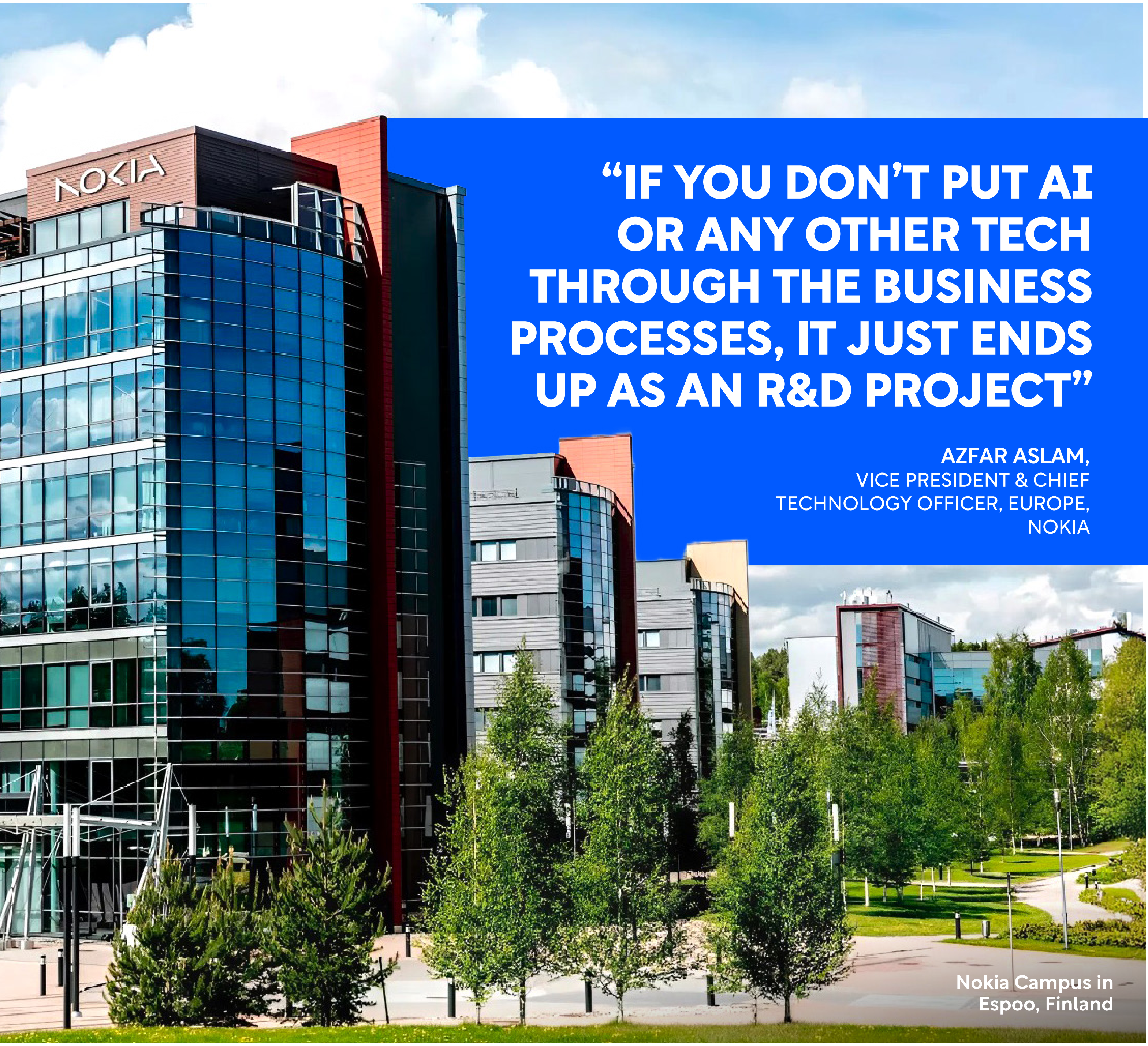
"The journey we started years ago with AI continues," says Azfar. "Every time I engage with customers I challenge them: have you thought about operationalising this? Have you thought about what's the impact and the benefit of these things? Why are you choosing these use cases? Start with the questions and you get to the right journey. It's also helped Nokia. We build networks for AI and to carry our workloads from data centres to the wide area networks. We also build a lot of AI into our own products. My challenge to our teams is always the same: what's the real impact?"

Driving innovation at Nokia

Nokia and Bell Labs have a history of pioneering innovation in AI. As well as developing AI solutions specifically for networking products that improve customer experience and usability, the business has worked on Gen AI models, solutions to improve energy efficiency and network performance, and chat-bots specifically for the telecom industry. Most recently, it announced its work with an ecosystem of industry partners to develop AI-powered Radio Access Networks that will transform future network operations.

Irrespective of application, the company advocates for responsible and trusted AI that delivers sustainable enterprise and industrial applications. Azfar points to the company's six pillars of responsible AI – fairness; reliability, safety and security; privacy; transparency; sustainability; and accountability – as being crucial for development.

"Transparency and accountability are particularly important, considering many of the industries we work with and in are so heavily regulated," he says. "We're running entire economies and societies on the digital fabric of data centres and networks – you can't compromise reliability or private data in any way. We play with new technologies and innovate, but we always factor failsafe mechanisms into everything we work with.



Nokia Campus in Espoo, Finland

> **“IF YOU DON’T PUT AI OR ANY OTHER TECH THROUGH THE BUSINESS PROCESSES, IT JUST ENDS UP AS AN R&D PROJECT”**
>
> **AZFAR ASLAM,**
> VICE PRESIDENT & CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, EUROPE, NOKIA

“I’ll give you an example,” he adds. “We provide networks for data centres, and the infrastructure needed to support the GPU and AI workloads is vast. It also has to be completely reliable. We’ve created digital twins that provide predictive capabilities so we can simulate network changes before they are made to avoid disruption that could have far ranging impact. Should there be challenges, the AI system also constantly learns about the entire network, enabling us to identify problems and restore systems quickly.”

Empowering change agents

Azfar points to several core application areas for AI, including improving operational efficiencies and ROI, as well as enhancing reliability in environments like data centres, networks and industrial applications.

“Until enterprises modify their operating models and transform the way they approach automation and AI they won’t be able to fully take advantage of the opportunities the technology offers,” says Azfar,

“WHEN WE’RE IMPLEMENTING AI, MY CHALLENGE TO OUR TEAMS IS ALWAYS THE SAME: WHAT’S THE REAL IMPACT?”

AZFAR ASLAM,
VICE PRESIDENT & CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, EUROPE, NOKIA

reflecting on how organisations can maximise the technology’s value.

“It’s one of the most challenging things to change because it encompasses several areas including new capabilities and configurations, as well as cultural change within the business,” he adds. “My advice is look for the evangelists and use early successes as your lighthouse – one of the things we need to do really well in the AI transition is make sure there are enough change agents in organisations. It’s rarely about technology, it’s about managing change and bringing an organisation from one stage to the other.

“We’ve seen huge transformation over the last decades, most recently with automation and industry 4.0,” says Azfar. “In this decade, AI is effectively doing that, but on steroids. We can use more data, have more predictive ways of working and make better decisions, but you have to distinguish between what’s important and what isn’t in all of that. And here I go back to my first point: if you’re delivering new products and adopting AI, is your margin improving? If the answer is yes, you’re doing something right.”

boomi and the Rise of Agentic Transformation

As enterprises grapple to use AI agents effectively, **Boomi** lifts the curtain on the challenges that need addressing, how to tackle them and how to win

WRITTEN BY: KITTY WHEELER

Agentstudio
Agent Garden
Agent Control Tower
AI
company_u...
Agents
Search Agents
Clear All
Show as
View by Provider
New
Agent Control Tower
Main Agent
Supervisor Agent
Boomi (100)
ServiceNow (100)
Amazon Bedrock (300)
IBM
Custom Agents
View More
100%

AI is advancing everything, from speeding up tasks in people's everyday lives to detecting life-threatening diseases before traditional symptoms even appear.

But AI is also complex and ever-changing, evolving faster than most can keep up with. Nonetheless, as a matter of survival, businesses must keep pace with AI's transformation, continually reassessing its shifting value, its risks and ultimately, what approach delivers the greatest ROI.

Agentic AI, which autonomously makes decisions and completes tasks broadly without human intervention, is accelerating business operations even further. But as advanced AI needs a solid foundation to thrive, many businesses are running into a familiar obstacle: their data.

From poor data quality and fragmented systems to a lack of real-time access and governance, organisations are recognising major gaps in their ability to harness AI effectively.

This is part of what Boomi, the leader in AI-driven automation, calls "the data problem that everyone is ignoring", according to Chris Hallenbeck, its SVP and GM of AI & Platform, because how can companies make effective use of AI without effective data?

Boomi is helping businesses understand how to utilise AI to the maximum and understand it holistically. In doing so, Boomi is positioning itself at the centre of the emerging AI agent ecosystem by offering solutions that not only create agents but also manage and govern them at scale.

From what's possible to what's safe

Agentic AI has emerged as a top focus area for business and technology leaders. Effectively autonomous digital workers, AI agents can perform increasingly complex tasks, from rerouting shipments to negotiating with vendors and approving expense reports.

CHRIS HALLENBECK

TITLE: SVP AND GM OF AI & PLATFORM

COMPANY: BOOMI

As General Manager of AI & Platform at Boomi, Chris oversees Boomi's AI product vision, execution and GTM strategy. A key responsibility is helping lead Boomi's creation of a unified platform for agentic transformation. To achieve these goals, Chris works closely with Boomi's product development organisation, SI partners and customers to ensure it is delivering on its commitment.

Chris brings 25+ years of enterprise cloud software and GTM experience from Google Cloud, SAP, and multiple successful AI startups. Most recently, Chris worked at McKinsey & Co where he advised CIOs and CTOs on AI adoption & digital transformation.

Chris Hallenbeck,
SVP and GM
of AI & Platform,
Boomi

Steve Lucas,
Chairman and CEO,
Boomi

STEVE LUCAS

TITLE: CHAIRMAN AND CEO

COMPANY: BOOMI

Steve Lucas brings nearly three decades of enterprise software leadership to his role as Chairman and CEO of Boomi.

Now in his third CEO role, he previously held senior executive roles at Adobe, SAP, Salesforce and BusinessObjects, with expertise in platform analytics and enterprise AI integration.

Steve's achievements include leading Marketo through Adobe's US$4.75bn acquisition and transforming iCIMS into a premier talent cloud platform before a billion-dollar investment round in 2022.

As a published author, his national best selling book "Digital Impact: The Human Element of AI-Driven Transformation" addresses digital fragmentation challenges in the AI era.

Unlike traditional AI systems that provide insights for human decision-makers, agents actively execute tasks with minimal human intervention.

"In a very short period, I won't be logging into systems. AI will take care of all that," says Steve Lucas, Chairman and CEO of Boomi.

"Agents will be everywhere and there will be swarms of intelligent agents that exist just for you, just for me.

"Inside of an organisation, there will not be thousands or tens of thousands, there will be hundreds of thousands, even millions of agents."

However, as Steve explains: "Boardroom conversations always start with what's possible when we're talking about AI agents, which is exciting.

"It's transformative, it's new. However, the conversation quickly pivots from what's possible to what's safe.

"Innovation and urgency without governance, things like agent sprawl, or agentic sprawl, can become a liability.

"It's very important that companies get the balance right, that they say: 'We understand what our objectives are and what AI can do', while also asking the questions: 'How can we govern, monitor, manage and optimise all of this? How can we get agentic transformation right?'"

Why agent governance is not a 'nice to have' anymore

As AI agents become embedded in business processes, agent governance becomes mission critical.

Chris says: "Everyone talks about agent governance but, in reality, most are lagging behind."

This gap creates an unavoidable risk as organisations begin deploying AI agents in production environments.

"Once agents are deployed to production, auditors are going to want to check everything," he adds.

The requirements for agentic governance are substantial:

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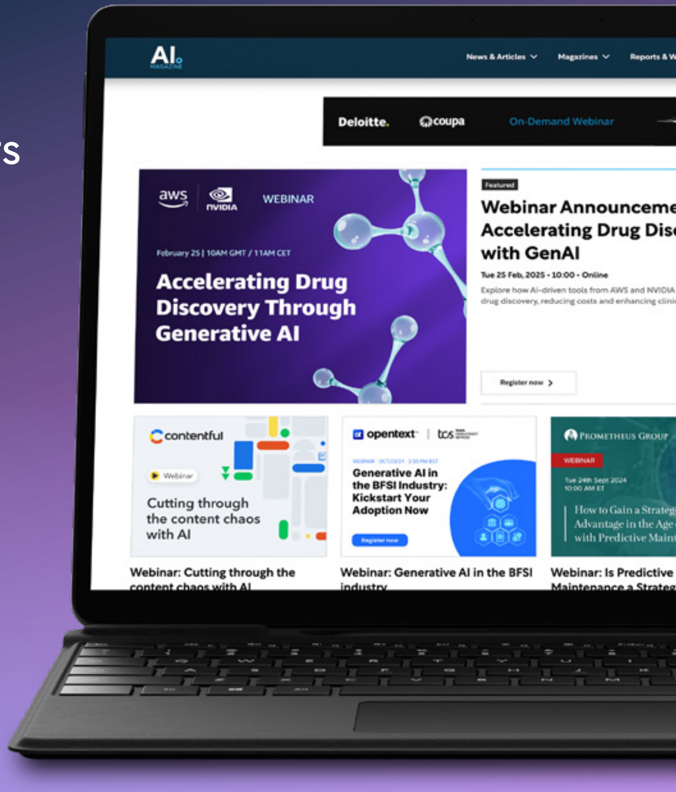
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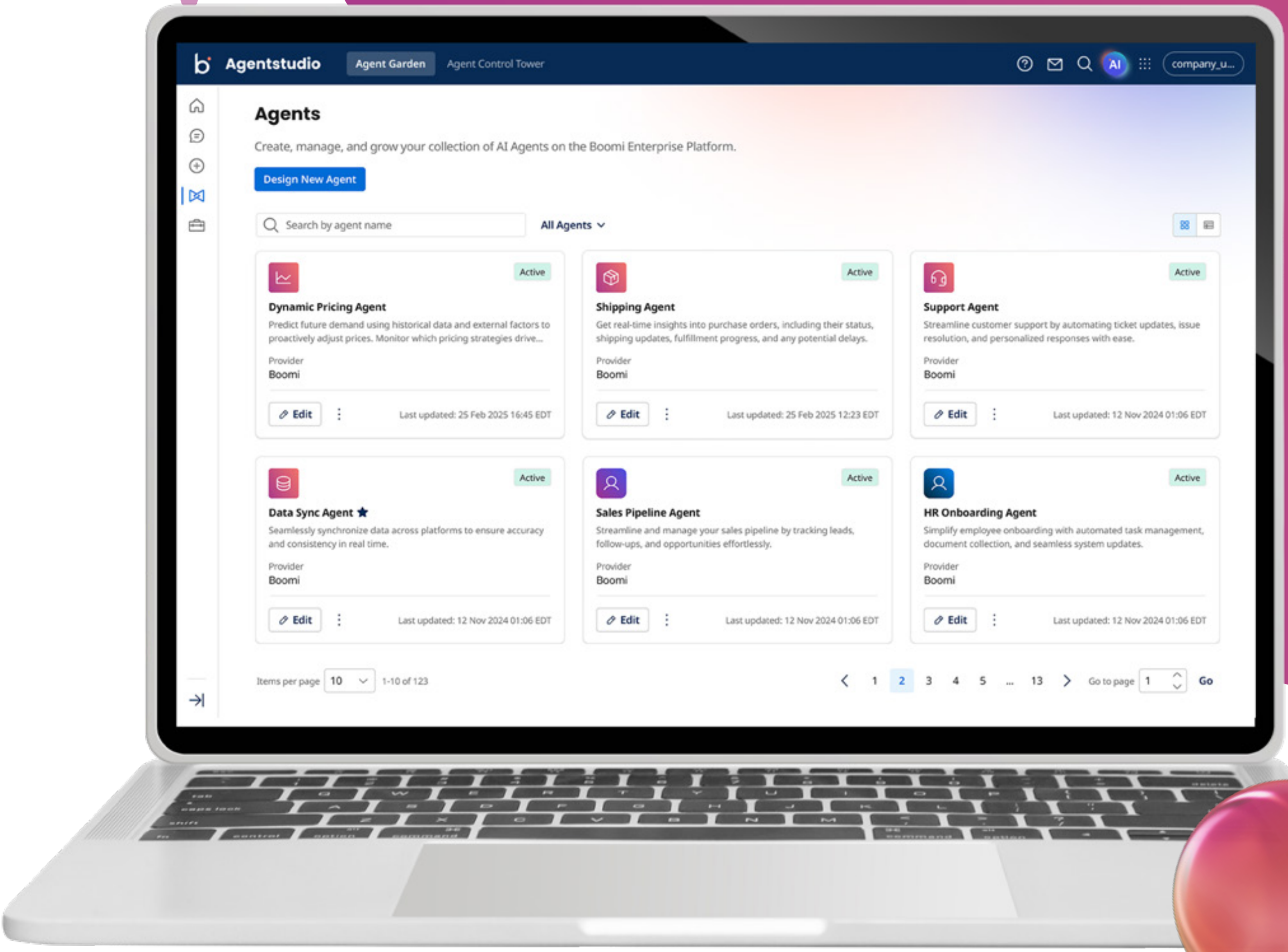

Agents

Create, manage, and grow your collection of AI Agents on the Boomi Enterprise Platform.

Dynamic Pricing Agent
Predict future demand using historical data and external factors to proactively adjust prices. Monitor which pricing strategies drive...
Provider
Boomi
Last updated: 25 Feb 2025 16:45 EDT

Shipping Agent
Get real-time insights into purchase orders, including their status, shipping updates, fulfillment progress, and any potential delays.
Provider
Boomi
Last updated: 25 Feb 2025 12:23 EDT

Support Agent
Streamline customer support by automating ticket updates, issue resolution, and personalized responses with ease.
Provider
Boomi
Last updated: 12 Nov 2024 01:06 EDT

Data Sync Agent ★
Seamlessly synchronize data across platforms to ensure accuracy and consistency in real time.
Provider
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Sales Pipeline Agent
Streamline and manage your sales pipeline by tracking leads, follow-ups, and opportunities effortlessly.
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HR Onboarding Agent
Simplify employee onboarding with automated task management, document collection, and seamless system updates.
Provider
Boomi
Last updated: 12 Nov 2024 01:06 EDT

"You need to know exactly which version of the model was used, who approved it and when," Chris explains.

"It must be properly versioned and you need assurance it wasn't altered before going into production.

"Then you have to log what it does like it was a user. You need to have things like explainable AI or reasoning systems that actually have an explanation as to why it made its decision with some level of confidence."

This means that, without such governance mechanisms, organisations face not only security and compliance risks but also the possibility of losing control over their AI deployments as they scale.

Why AI agent management can't wait

The simplicity of building agents means their proliferation within organisations will happen faster than many anticipate – making establishing agent lifecycle management solutions a critical present-day need, rather than a future consideration.

"People today are only getting a grip of how fast agents are going to grow," Chris warns.

"Once you see how simple it is to build an agent, you can build one in an hour or two, do testing for another day. Now, it solves a little problem within a workflow that used to be problematic, slow or required lots of coding and was suboptimal."

This approach to creating agents is so easy that it can lead to what Chris calls “agent sprawl”, a phenomenon familiar to IT departments that have dealt with database sprawl, API sprawl and other manifestations of uncontrolled technology proliferation.

“All of a sudden, you see there are thousands and thousands of places where this would be amazing,” he says.

“The aspect of agent sprawl is there. But regarding the governance issue – all that has to be managed and monitored.”

Building trust in AI agent implementations

For AI agents to be successfully adopted within organisations, trust is essential – not just from leadership but throughout the company.

This trust isn’t built on promises of perfection but on visibility, intent and measured improvement. Trust, in other words, requires governance.

“Agents will be everywhere and there will be swarms of intelligent agents that exist just for you, just for me”

STEVE LUCAS,
CHAIRMAN AND CEO,
BOOMI

“Trust is not the same thing as promising perfection,” Steve explains.

“Trust doesn’t come from humans being perfect with each other. We are imperfect, yet we trust each other. We trust each other because of intent. We trust each other because of transparency.”

For enterprises implementing AI agents, this means starting with clear problems, deploying in controlled environments and measuring results meticulously.

“If you want enterprises to ultimately trust AI, that visibility needs to exist,” he continues. “Real, measurable improvements that make people’s work better and their lives easier – that’s it.

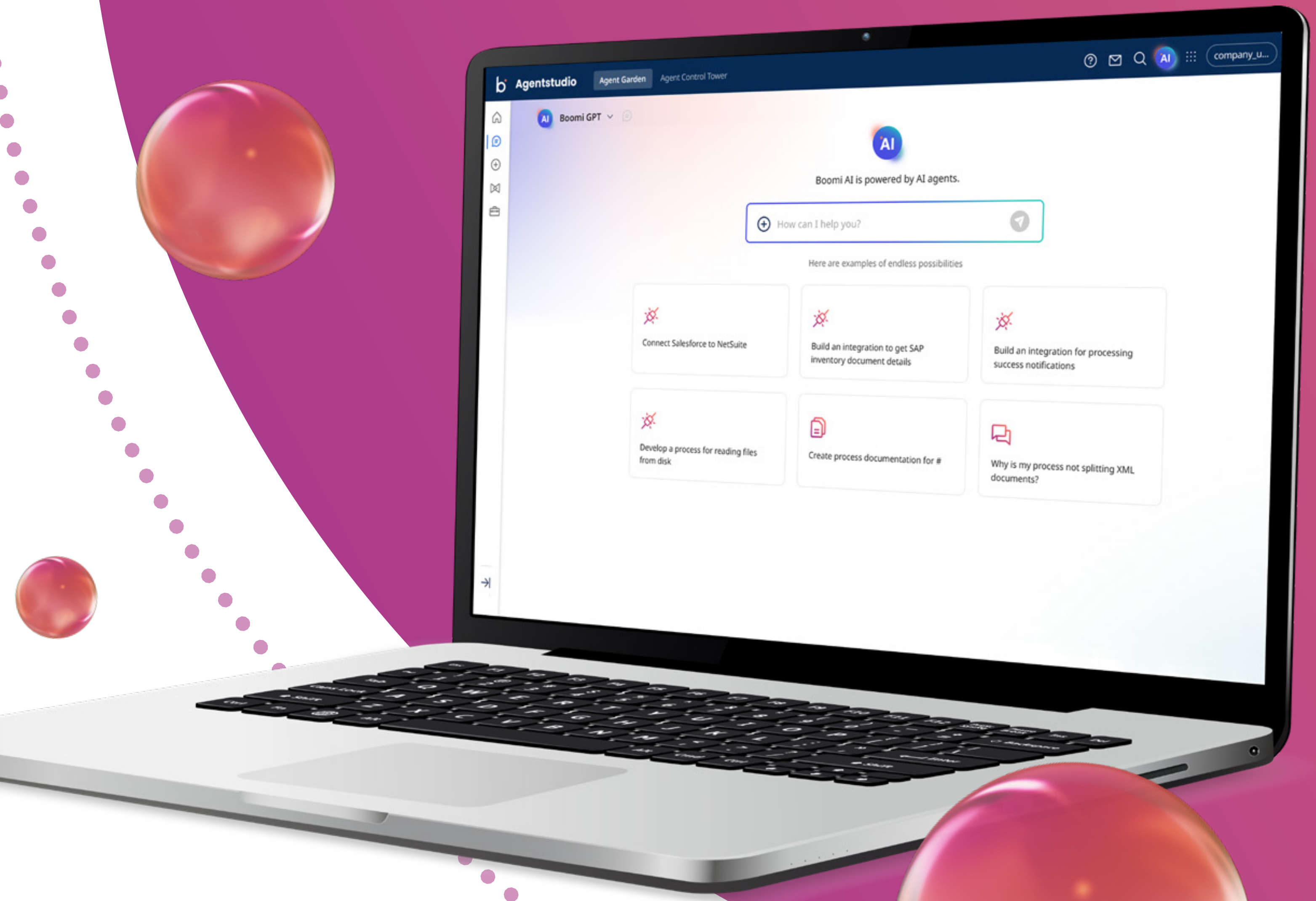
“The breakthrough moment that we’re all shooting for is when your team stops asking if agents will work in a particular scenario and starts asking where else can they apply them. That’s when trust becomes belief.”

The Boomi approach to AI agent management

Boomi’s AI strategy centres on creating what it calls a ‘connective fabric for agent orchestration.’

Boomi Agentstudio, the full agent lifecycle management solution, promises to help businesses evolve from digital to agentic transformation, shaping their future.

It includes four integrated components: Agent Marketplace,



Boomi AI is powered by AI agents.

How can I help you?

Here are examples of endless possibilities

Connect Salesforce to NetSuite

Build an integration to get SAP inventory document details

Build an integration for processing success notifications

Develop a process for reading files from disk

Create process documentation for #

Why is my process not splitting XML documents?

Agent Designer, Agent Garden, a secure container for running agents, and Agent Control Tower for monitoring and governance.

"Any company that wants to be part of the future of agent lifecycle management is going to need our platform," says Steve. "We're going to unify fragmented agent frameworks. Google's got one. Amazon's got one. Microsoft's got one. We've got one. We're going to unify all of those."

Boomi's vision is to power the next wave of agentic innovation by serving as the interoperability hub where different agents, tools and standards converge.

This approach addresses another uncomfortable concern for IT leaders: avoiding vendor lock-in while still being able to innovate with emerging technologies.

"How do I innovate today and not get locked in? It's top of mind, and IT leaders are trying to figure that out," says Chris.

> **“AI is not a replacement for humans – it really is at its best when it’s plugged in and adjacent to the things that the humans are doing”**

ALISON BIGGAN,
CMO,
BOOMI

AI agents as digital employees

What AI can do, is make us superhuman – it can take on certain tasks that then allow us to uplevel ourselves to things that require human input and creativity.

Alison Biggan, CMO of Boomi, emphasises that this perspective helps address employee concerns about AI implementation.

“AI is not a replacement for humans; it really is at its best when it’s plugged in and adjacent to the things that the humans are doing, again giving you scale,” she says.

The company’s internal experience supports this approach.

At Boomi, AI has made employees more productive in engineering, support, sales, marketing and finance and audit.

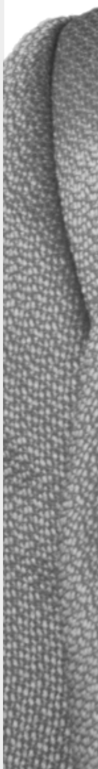
Boomi’s sales teams are using AI every day, from preparing for customer calls highlighting the right business value to understanding the broader market competition.

ALISON BIGGAN

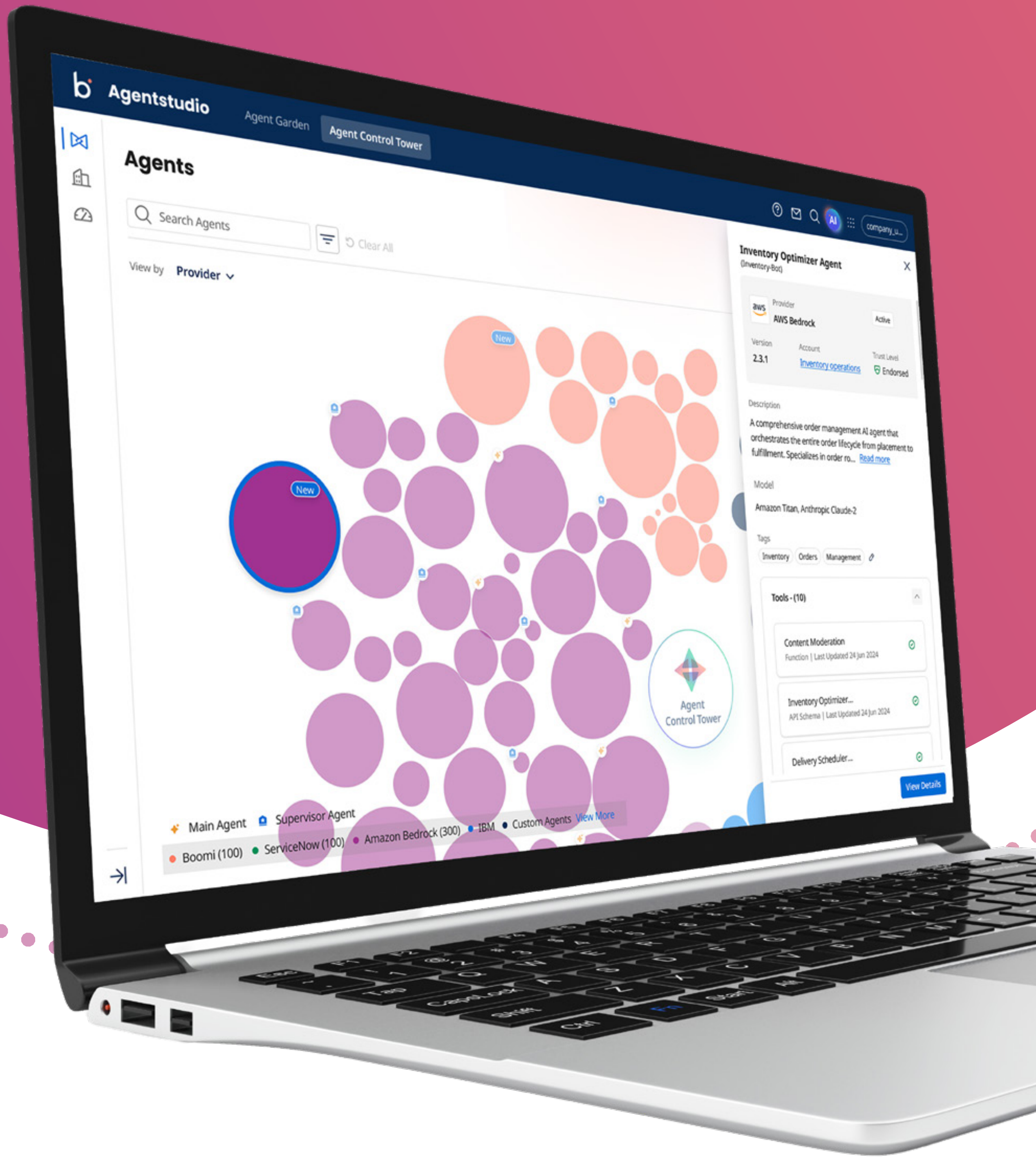
TITLE: CMO

COMPANY: BOOMI

As former President of Corporate Marketing at SAP, Alison brings more than 20 years of experience driving real-world impact through technology and the power of marketing. Having joined SAP through its acquisition of BusinessObjects, she led the company’s product marketing strategy, overseeing its global field and industry marketing teams, and played an instrumental role in the introduction and growth of flagship product SAP HANA in 2010. Alison has held multiple global leadership roles in the platform business, including sales roles with the Vancouver Canuck Foundation, PGA Tour, and BC Lions. She attended the University of British Columbia and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and a diploma in Marketing Communications from the British Columbia Institute of Technology.



Alison Biggan,
CMO,
Boomi


Agentstudio
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Amazon Bedrock (300)
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Custom Agents
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Inventory Optimizer Agent
(Inventory-Bot)

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> “People today are only getting a grip of how fast agents are going to grow”
>
> **CHRIS HALLENBECK,**
> SVP AND GM OF AI & PLATFORM,
> BOOMI

The customer success and support teams are also using AI agents to provide immediate feedback and answers to questions, accelerating hyperproductivity.

Alison continues: “We have some really good stats around adoption and employees have customers telling us that using or having access to the agents has increased their productivity by almost 50%.”

This means that, as organisations move beyond seeing AI as just another technology concept to deploying agents as digital workers, their agent lifecycle management approach needs to evolve accordingly.

"The reality is that everyone is out there talking about the proliferation of agents, the opportunity of agents," Alison continues. "But nobody's talking about how you're actually going to manage those agents, especially when you have agents across multiple systems and from multiple vendors."

Alison says Boomi's message is: "Everyone's talking about AI agents. Everyone's thinking about AI agents. Everyone's being challenged on how they're going to use AI agents. We can actually show you how you can use this to benefit your existing setup and system, your existing integrations."

"The companies that ultimately are going to win in this era of AI-driven automation are the organisations that treat agents like digital employees," says Steve.

"There's onboarding. There's roles. There's accountability. There's metrics."

The difference, however, is scale.

"The difference will be from human talent, is that these agents can scale infinitely," he continues.

"If you've got the right infrastructure, this will allow organisations to win and create disproportionate competitive advantage."

For organisations considering AI agent implementation, Boomi says start building structured governance now or face significant challenges later.

Steve concludes: "Is there a version of my company that has the same number of employees that I have today, but I can do 10 times more? Two short years ago, any self-respecting CEO would have said, 'not possible.'

"Today? Possible. The real question people have to ask themselves is: are they ready for this?"

DC BLOX

DIGITA ACR

DC BLOX EXPANDS L INFRASTRUCTURE OSS SOUTHEAST US

WRITTEN BY:
MARCUS LAW

PRODUCED BY:
LEWIS VAUGHAN

DC BLOX's community-focused strategy and AI-ready infrastructure is driving data centre growth in the southeastern United States

The digital infrastructure landscape in the United States has undergone rapid transformation in recent years, driven by surging demand for cloud computing, edge services and now AI workloads. While traditional data centre hubs like Northern Virginia, Dallas and Silicon Valley continue to dominate the national market, the southeastern US has emerged as a region with increasing strategic importance for digital infrastructure development.

Hyperscale providers are seeking to diversify their geographic footprint, bringing computing resources closer to growing population centres, while addressing power constraints and reducing latency.

Amid this rapid growth, DC BLOX has emerged as a key player in the southeastern digital infrastructure ecosystem, creating a comprehensive network of interconnected data centres, fibre networks and cable landing stations that serve enterprise, government and hyperscale clients across the US.

Founded 10 years ago, the company operates from its Atlanta headquarters but has strategically built facilities across the region, developing a unique approach to market expansion that prioritises community integration and relationship building with both local utilities and customers.

DC BLOX
33
DC BLOX
DC BLOX
DC BLOX
DC BLOX
DC

Greenville, SC data center

At the helm of this expansion is Jeff Uphues, CEO of DC BLOX, whose vision has guided the company from its early days with a single facility to its current position as a regional infrastructure provider with multiple facilities across six states. With a career spanning over three decades in communications infrastructure, Jeff brings extensive experience in network development, market expansion and strategic partnerships.

"I've been in the communications infrastructure business for essentially my entire career," he says. "It evolved over the course of the last 35 years in various roles of responsibility, from working with major telecommunications companies to entrepreneurial ventures that allowed me to apply those learnings to build new organisations."

DC BLOX builds trust through cultural pillars across markets

In an industry often defined by technical metrics like power density and connectivity specifications, DC BLOX has taken a different approach – placing equal emphasis on its organisational culture and values.

This culture, according to Jeff, follows a specific order of priority: "Employees first, customers second and investors third. If you take care of your employees, they'll take care of your customers. If you take care of your customers, they'll take care of the investors."

The company has codified this approach through four specific cultural pillars that guide operations across its expanding footprint. These include transparency in all business dealings, trust-building both internally and with external stakeholders, teamwork across departments and facilities and tenacious execution on commitments.

"You end up building a great company," Jeff says. "My leadership has evolved in continually protecting our vision and culture, and then adapting our mission as the company grows."

This philosophy extends beyond client relationships to include deep partnerships with utilities and community organisations – a major factor in markets where power availability has become as important as physical space. "When you partner with

> **"Employees first, customers second, and investors third. If you take care of your employees, they'll take care of your customers. If you take care of your customers, they'll take care of the investors"**
>
> **JEFF UPHUES,**
> CEO,
> DC BLOX

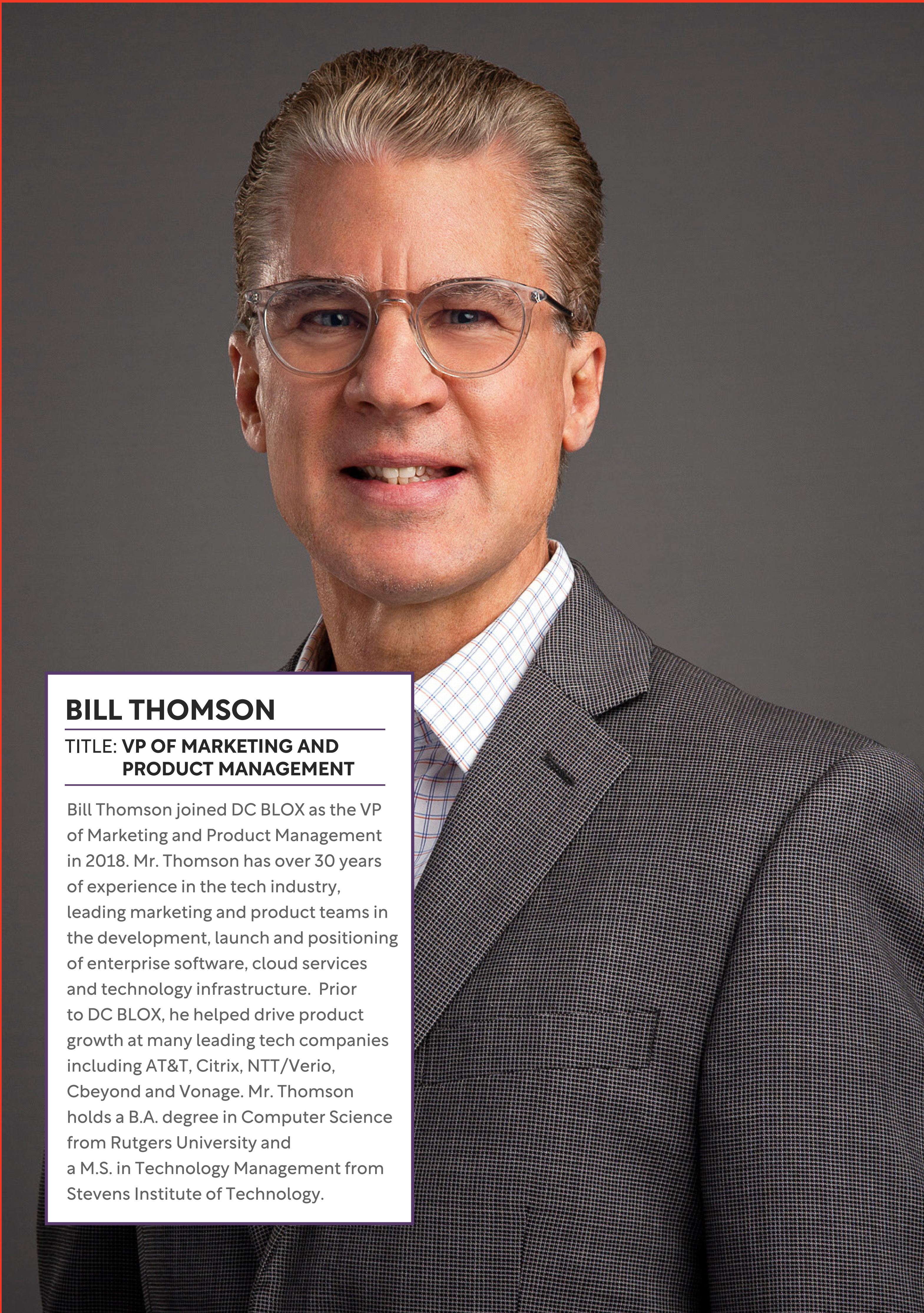
JEFF UPHUES

TITLE: **CEO**

Jeff leads DC BLOX as CEO where he is responsible for leading the company's strategy and development of data centres and a fibre network ecosystem across the Southeast.

Mr Uphues is a 30-year veteran in the IT industry having held C-suite leadership roles for Liquid Web, Cbeyond, Bandwidth, ACSI Network Technologies, MCI and WilTel.

Jeff serves as an active board member in several technology firms, is a graduate of the Harvard Business School, Rice University's Jones School of Business Executive Education program in Finance and Accounting and completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Texas at Arlington.



BILL THOMSON

TITLE: **VP OF MARKETING AND PRODUCT MANAGEMENT**

Bill Thomson joined DC BLOX as the VP of Marketing and Product Management in 2018. Mr. Thomson has over 30 years of experience in the tech industry, leading marketing and product teams in the development, launch and positioning of enterprise software, cloud services and technology infrastructure. Prior to DC BLOX, he helped drive product growth at many leading tech companies including AT&T, Citrix, NTT/Verio, Cbeyond and Vonage. Mr. Thomson holds a B.A. degree in Computer Science from Rutgers University and a M.S. in Technology Management from Stevens Institute of Technology.

utilities and communities, it creates a strong foundation for success, particularly with the current demands on power infrastructure," he adds.

DC BLOX strategy prioritises Southeast market development approach

While Tier 1 data centre markets like Northern Virginia and Dallas have historically attracted the most investment and development, secondary markets across the southeast have become increasingly attractive alternatives. These locations offer lower land costs, available power and access to growing metropolitan populations, yet they present unique challenges including less established digital infrastructure ecosystems.

DC BLOX's market entry strategy has been methodical, deliberately avoiding immediate competition in the largest metropolitan areas where established operators had already secured significant market share. "We're headquartered in Atlanta, but initially focused on surrounding states: Tennessee, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina," says Jeff. "The largest city in the South is Atlanta, but we chose to target markets with less competition first, where we could build and refine our business processes."

This approach – establishing footholds in smaller markets before tackling the region's primary hub – has allowed DC BLOX to develop expertise and operational competencies while reducing competitive pressures.

Today, DC BLOX maintains its disciplined geographic focus rather than attempting global expansion, even as international data centre operations gain popularity among some competitors. "It would be easy to get distracted by opportunities in regions like Asia, but that's not our strength," Jeff says. "Our strength is investing deeply in the communities where we operate."

Myrtle Beach cable landing station a pivotal milestone

Cable landing stations serve as critical infrastructure where submarine telecommunications cables connect to land-based networks, forming essential links in global internet infrastructure. Traditionally, these facilities have been concentrated in major coastal hubs like New York, New Jersey and Miami on the US east coast, leaving mid-Atlantic states without direct international connectivity.

A key turning point in DC BLOX's evolution came with the development of a cable landing station in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina: a project that opened doors to relationships with hyperscale clients while addressing a significant infrastructure gap in the region. Prior to this development, data traffic from southeastern states needed to travel to these distant connection points before reaching international destinations, adding latency and reducing network resilience.

"I never imagined we would build a data centre in a tourist destination like Myrtle Beach – it wasn't on our initial list of target markets," Jeff says. The opportunity emerged through collaborative planning with major technology companies seeking additional landing points for their submarine cable projects.

How JCI Supports DC Blox with Unique Cooling Technology

JCI Sales Engineer Charles Casey explains how the company's sustainable magnetic bearing chillers support DC BLOX data centres in becoming more efficient

Johnson Controls International (JCI) holds a multi-year partnership with DC BLOX, primarily centred on the implementation of magnetic bearing air-cooled chillers for next-generation data centre cooling requirements.

Charles Casey, Senior Sales Engineer for Data Centres & Complex Projects at Johnson Controls, describes the partnership as addressing core data centre challenges.

For JCI, this involves offering mechanical engineering solutions that deliver both technical and business outcomes.

"I support our customers from design inception on their data centre projects all the way through to execution," he says. "My background and specialties are in mechanical engineering and business finance. It's a position that merges the two, understanding where the optimum engineering solution and business solution cross."

DELIVERING ON DC BLOX EFFICIENCY TARGETS

The partnership focuses on implementing JCI's magnetic bearing air-cooled YVAM chillers, which represent a core component of DC BLOX's infrastructure approach.

"With DC BLOX, they've selected our magnetic bearing air-cooled chillers for certain projects, which focus on efficiency for next-generation data centres," Charles says. "These chillers either reduce power costs significantly for the same energy usage or free up additional IT capacity."

This approach reflects the strategic challenges faced by data centre operators working within power constraints. Charles explains that data centre providers must work within fixed power allocations, making efficiency a competitive advantage.

"There's a set amount of power on the site," he says. "In next-generation data centres, working with partners like JCI, we help determine how to build the optimal solution that either uses that power most efficiently, most economically or maximises revenue potential."

DRIVING SUSTAINABLE COOLING TECHNOLOGY

The relationship between the two companies extends beyond traditional vendor-client arrangements, with DC BLOX participating in product development processes at Johnson Controls.

"DC BLOX has been a partner in our development of multiple platform iterations for data centre products," Charles explains. "Forward-thinking customers like DC BLOX challenge our engineering team to provide data centre solutions that address their core needs – whether that's increased IT power capacity or AI capabilities."

The technical specifications of the magnetic bearing chillers are designed to address multiple sustainability objectives, including energy efficiency and environmental impact reduction measures.

Charles adds: "We have a solution using an in-house designed, proprietary magnetic bearing compressor. This proven York technology has very high efficiency and minimal friction that addresses multiple challenges for data centre applications. This compressor can handle both IT and AI workloads while meeting sustainability goals by consuming less power, using low-GWP refrigerant and maintaining a compact footprint. The manufacturing process also ensures a low total environmental impact."

AN URGENT NEED TO FUTURE-PROOF

With data centre rack densities increasing rapidly, JCI is committed to innovating cooling technologies that can accommodate evolving thermal management requirements. The company's approach involves creating flexible cooling solutions that can adapt to changing thermal conditions and increasing power densities.

"Future-proofing data centres is certainly a hot topic because of the unknowns," Charles says. "Everyone is discussing what the future data centre looks like and there are many potential outcomes."

"What we're doing is developing multiple different platforms of solutions that can solve that problem. That could be traditional, like an air-cooled chiller deployment, but we're also looking at water-cooled chiller deployments – water-cooled chillers with dry coolers – since water usage effectiveness is so important."

The partnership with DC BLOX also seeks to reduce risk through collaboration between engineering teams at both companies, with solutions tailored to specific site requirements and future capacity projections.

"Our systems can accommodate higher chilled water temperatures and higher densities. For vertical buildings, we can manage increased heat rejection within the same rooftop footprint," Charles says. "We work to eliminate or mitigate these variables to deliver the optimal solution while reducing the customer's risk.

"As DC BLOX continues to expand, our focus is on maintaining our partnership as they grow and serving as a key supplier. Throughout this process, we're constantly optimising our solutions to provide significant value to DC BLOX, which they can then pass on to their customers."

Learn more

DC BLOX
CABLE LANDING STATION
Myrtle Beach

Myrtle Beach cable landing station

Jeff explains that DC BLOX worked closely with hyperscale companies – specifically Google and Meta – who were laying subsea cables that would connect at this location. The scale of the Myrtle Beach facility aligned with DC BLOX's established development model.

"The initial scale of a Myrtle Beach cable landing facility aligned to DC BLOX's established development model however we had to reimagine what a hyperscale cable landing station could be to address the changing demands, capacity and scale of AI," Jeff notes. "Ultimately, we created a facility that was similar in size to our other market deployments but incorporated the best of traditional cable landing stations and the flexibility of larger hyperscale facilities."

Bill Thomson, DC BLOX VP of Marketing & Product Management explains the significance: "Most of the cable landing stations on the eastern seaboard were concentrated in the northeast or Florida, leaving nothing in the mid-Atlantic area. This project finally brought international subsea connectivity to a rapidly growing region."

This strategic infrastructure investment created demand for additional connectivity solutions. "Our customers needed a way to connect to Atlanta – the southeast's connectivity hub – with high-capacity, dark fibre networks.

There was no east-west route across the region," Bill says.

Responding to this need, DC BLOX developed substantial terrestrial fibre infrastructure to connect these previously isolated connectivity points.

"We built what's now considered the dark fiber backbone of the southeast, and the region's fibre connection to the world," Bill adds.

The company operates and is developing new facilities across the southeastern US, with large hyperscale campuses in Atlanta and regional Edge compute locations in Chattanooga, Huntsville, Birmingham, Montgomery, N. Augusta, Greenville, Charleston,

> **"We built what's now considered the dark fiber backbone of the southeast, and the region's fibre connection to the world"**
>
> **BILL THOMSON,**
> VP OF MARKETING & PRODUCT MANAGEMENT, DC BLOX

BRINGING A UNIQUE APPROACH TO DATA CENTER DELIVERY

At Evans, our Advanced Technology Team is meeting growing data center demand in collaboration with DC BLOX through a unique design-build approach

AI is changing everything. Not least the scale and complexity of the vast data centers required to meet increased AI workloads. From surging power demand, energy consumption and cooling requirements, to impact on site selection and the rise of hyperscalers, designing this new breed of data center requires a unique approach.

"Demand is unprecedented," says Corey Lemming, SVP of Evans General Contractors (Evans) Advanced Technology Construction, which specialises in building highly complex and mission-critical infrastructure including data centers. "Whether we're building directly for an AI hyperscaler, a developer or a co-location partner we have minimal time to conceptualize, plan, design and cost a project that – more often than not – is a first of its kind."

A revolutionary approach to data center design-build

Fortunately, this is where Evans Advanced Technology excels. Formed just three years ago, it has delivered solutions from revolutionary cable landing stations to hyperscale data centers for some of the largest businesses in the US.

It does so with an innovative approach that's unique in the market, combining a collaborative design-build methodology, pre-development expertise and a focus on turnkey solutions delivered in close partnership with customers.

"Historically, data center design and build was controlled by the customer, but we offer a different approach," says Corey of the company's pre-development expertise. "We select sites, we carry out due diligence, help with power negotiations, local politics, assemble the right team from a broad ecosystem we've developed, and turn that into a bespoke solution.

First-of-a-kind innovation with DC BLOX

This approach has paid off with countless clients, including DC BLOX, a digital infrastructure provider that delivers integrated data center and network solutions to hyperscalers, enterprises, and comms and tech giants.

The pair have worked together for more than three years, building a close relationship based on a shared culture. The partnership has delivered several industry firsts, including an innovative cable landing station and edge data center in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and, more recently, DC BLOX's first hyperscale campus in Atlanta – where Evans is headquartered.

"It started at Myrtle Beach," Corey explains. "The facility connects the southeast via subsea and domestic long haul fibre to Atlanta, where the data center market is booming. We saw the opportunity to get into the game and went through every step together in partnership from looking at land to test fits and concept.

"It was incredible how we essentially built out two hyperscale data centers out of a shared idea," he says. "We're currently underway with construction of the first, and we'll be breaking ground on the second, an 80MW data center, very soon. It's been a true journey together, built on trust, integrity and shared values – the relationship is the foundation on how we'll grow together strategically and diversify into new markets together in the future."

> *"We're looking for the hard and complex projects that are first-of-a-kinds and we deliver them as one team with our clients – it's absolutely mission critical with today's data center market, where there's a need to do things differently and accelerate every development."*

Corey Lemming

Senior Vice President of Advanced Technology

Evans General Contractors

LEARN MORE →

Myrtle Beach and Richmond, with additional expansions planned. This distributed footprint creates a connected ecosystem rather than isolated data centre sites.

"DC BLOX's footprint is unlike any other data centre operator in the southeast," Jeff claims. "We've made a significant impact by improving both network capacity and data centre infrastructure across multiple southeastern markets."

AI drives increased digital infrastructure demand

The rise of AI has created substantial demand for data centre capacity and connectivity, something DC BLOX has positioned itself to capitalise on.

"AI is driving every aspect of infrastructure demand," says Jeff. "From large language models (LLMs) that companies are developing to edge inference model deployments – both require robust facilities and connectivity."

This evolution has changed customer requirements dramatically. "Customers who previously needed 10 megawatts now require 100 megawatts. This growth, driven by AI, has required us to scale our capabilities substantially," Jeff explains.

The company's original plans for the Atlanta market shifted in response to these changing needs. "We didn't enter Atlanta planning to sell 120-megawatt campuses to single customers. We expected gradual growth over time, but then the industry evolved rapidly as AI created unprecedented demand."

Bill notes that fibre networks are equally critical to support AI infrastructure.

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South Carolina Governor
Henry McMaster speaking
at DC BLOX Myrtle Beach
cable landing station
ribbon-cutting

How Ciena is Powering Regional AI Data Centre Growth

CTO OF THE AMERICAS KEVIN SHEEHAN EXPLAINS HOW CIENA IS SUPPORTING DC BLOX IN ADAPTING ITS DATA CENTRE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AI CONNECTIVITY DEMANDS

As the global AI race continues to heat up, data centre connectivity requirements are being stretched. This has caused organisations to move from centralised AI processing to more distributed models, which is making regional data centres increasingly critical. To confront this shift, leading provider of networking systems and software Ciena has been building connectivity infrastructure for AI workloads since early 2024. Kevin Sheehan, Ciena's CTO of the Americas, explains that the company's initial AI focus involved "building up connectivity between data centres where learning was taking place" to bolster connectivity between facilities to support AI training. He says: "We had to teach all of these engines how to do AI, and they continue to learn whatever aspect they're being targeted for."

Confronting infrastructure challenges

The data centre industry is now witnessing a focus on distributed AI models – those that bring computation closer to end users. Looking ahead, Kevin reveals that this transition will occur in phases, suggesting: "Distributed first into regional locations, then into metro locations and finally right out to the edge." This shift has created significant infrastructure challenges for data centre operators: more high-speed connectivity, power efficiency and latency.

"Whether we're talking about centralised AI or distributed AI, it's about network capacity," Kevin says. "There's huge growth in network capacity related to AI." Power consumption presents another challenge for data centre companies. As data centres expand their capacity and add more networking equipment, electricity demand soars whilst supply remains constrained. "There's just not enough electricity. It's really important to balance huge increases in capacity without huge amounts of energy usage," Kevin continues. "You want these inference engines to work in as real-time a fashion as possible."

Building a connectivity evolution

Enterprise customers are driving much of the demand for distributed AI infrastructure, with companies across a broad range of industries adopting AI that requires new types of connectivity solutions. However, these organisations increasingly need to access external graphics processing units (GPUs) – the chips essential for AI workloads.

What sets Ciena's approach to AI infrastructure apart is its core strength: offering the highest network performance, speed and connectivity while also maximising capacity on optical fibres. The company has maintained this leadership

position for more than 25 years, investing heavily in miniaturising its technology whilst improving power efficiency. "We still provide almost double the capacity as our nearest competitor on a single wavelength with our WaveLogic 6 coherent optics," Kevin reveals.

Ciena's focus aims to address the dual challenge of increasing capacity whilst working to reduce energy consumption. Kevin explains that Ciena has also developed capabilities in IP and optical convergence – the integration of internet protocol networking with optical transmission systems, integrating coherent pluggable transceivers directly in routers.

"Power utilisation is critical and minimising that is as important as growing the amount of fibre capacity. So Ciena's uniquely positioned on that front," he says. "Ciena is one of the only providers in the industry that has a true multilayer management system that's also AI ready as we continue to add AI functionality into our management platform – having a single pane of glass to monitor and troubleshoot is critical."

Capturing a changing AI market

Ciena's relationship with DC BLOX highlights the company's collaborative approach to data centre market development.

> *"One thing we know for sure in the AI space, is that it's changing rapidly. The more communication and the more eyes on the field, the more likely you are to have great success."*
>
> Kevin Sheehan
> CTO of the Americas, Ciena

The companies have worked together for a number of years across the US and involve regular communication to share market insights and technical requirements in order to anticipate future connectivity needs across the data centre industry.

"We share our insights on where things are going and where additional connectivity might be needed," Kevin says. "We've formed a very close partnership with them across all levels of the organisation and listen equally to what they're hearing and what they need – both from locations and from technology." This engagement model reflects the rapidly changing nature of the AI infrastructure market and how the data centre industry needs to move to support it.

Learn more

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"Bringing infrastructure closer to end users is essential, particularly for applications requiring quick response times and low latency. As real-time applications grow, cloud infrastructure, AI systems and high-capacity networks need to be regionally deployed."

The company has observed significant increases in fibre requirements. "We started with 432-count fibre cables in our networks. Then customers requested 864-count, and now we're seeing demands for 1,728-count fibre," Jeff says. "The requirements for data transport between core facilities, edge facilities and entrance points is growing exponentially."

Bill adds context to these technology demands: "Consumer expectations have fundamentally changed. When people can get products ordered in the morning delivered the same day, they expect similar responsiveness from their banks, healthcare providers and other services. This is driving widespread digital transformation across sectors."

How DC BLOX partners with Evans, JCI and Ciena for project execution

The data centre construction sector faces unprecedented constraints as AI continues to drive demand. As a result, strategic partnerships remain central to DC BLOX's ability to deliver projects on schedule. The company has developed long-term relationships with firms like Evans General Contractors and Johnson Controls (JCI) to maintain construction velocity and equipment availability.

"We're not a general contractor construction company, so we need

Myrtle Beach cable landing station

strategic execution partnerships," Jeff explains. "Evans was key for several reasons: they understand the southeast market exceptionally well and have established relationships with local authorities and contractors throughout the region."

This regional familiarity provides advantages in navigating municipal permitting processes, local building codes and workforce availability – factors that can significantly impact project timelines. Evans General Contractors has built a reputation for data centre expertise and its team has executed critical data centre infrastructure projects for the largest global hyperscale clients over the past decade, allowing DC BLOX to leverage their domain knowledge across multiple facilities.

These relationships build on shared values and previous working relationships rather than transactional vendor arrangements. "Our partnership with Evans is built on shared capabilities, geographic proximity and aligned values – that's what makes the relationship successful," says Jeff.

Equipment supply chain challenges have similarly necessitated strategic partnerships with infrastructure providers. While many data centre operators work with multiple suppliers, DC BLOX has developed a deeper relationship with JCI to ensure equipment availability and technical consistency across its facilities.

"JCI offers a diverse product portfolio that supports our evolving facility designs and requirements," Jeff notes. This product diversity becomes particularly important as DC BLOX develops facilities

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Electrical equipment at DC BLOX Birmingham, AL data center

ranging from edge deployments to hyperscale campuses, each requiring appropriately scaled infrastructure solutions. "We need partners who can support our design, engineering and deployment needs across different facility scales," he adds.

Beyond construction and equipment partnerships, DC BLOX has also forged critical relationships in network connectivity – an essential component for modern data centre operations. The company's partnership with Ciena, a leading provider of networking systems and software, has been instrumental in establishing the carrier-grade connectivity infrastructure that differentiates DC BLOX's service offering.

"DC BLOX has worked with Ciena as a partner since our company's founding," Jeff explains. "Our vision from the beginning was to ensure that carrier-grade, resilient connectivity services were a key part of the value proposition that we offered our customers and Ciena has been a fantastic partner in helping us to achieve it.

"Our regional network now connecting five operating data centres is powered by Ciena and they continue to provide us with innovative technology and expert support to help us expand our services to meet the ever-growing demands for higher-bandwidth communications."

DC BLOX maps future growth in edge and hyperscale infrastructure

Looking to the future, DC BLOX plans continued expansion across the region, with particular focus on both edge facilities and hyperscale campuses.

> **“As DC BLOX continues to grow, we’ll maintain the values that built our company. Culture and trust are ultimately what DC BLOX builds”**
>
> **JEFF UPHUES,**
> CEO,
> DC BLOX

“We’ll continue investing in southeastern markets while gradually expanding our regional footprint,” Jeff says. “Our edge facilities increasingly serve as connectivity centres for hyperscale companies and can evolve into inference capability nodes supporting AI applications.”

The company also plans campus-style developments. “We have facilities on both the east and west sides of Atlanta that are 100-plus megawatt sites each. We’ll continue building campus environments with multiple facilities in close proximity to our core facilities.”

Bill believes the industry remains in early stages of AI infrastructure development: "If AI were the Internet, we'd be back in 1998. We're just getting started – even our customers are still figuring out their AI infrastructure requirements."

This evolution creates both challenges and opportunities. "Many companies have paused to reassess their AI infrastructure strategy because the technology is evolving so rapidly," Bill adds. "From advances in GPU capacity to new cooling technologies – the next generation of solutions is still being developed."

Regardless of how the technology evolves, Jeff emphasises that the company's core values will remain constant: "As DC BLOX continues to grow, we'll maintain the values that built our company. We design, develop and operate excellent data centres, but we do so with a foundation of transparency and trust with our customers, employees and partners.

"Culture and trust are ultimately what DC BLOX builds." ○

JOHNSON CONTROLS:

CHANGING THE TIDE IN THE DATA CENTRE INDUSTRY

AD FEATURE

WRITTEN BY:
AMBER
JACKSON

PRODUCED BY:
LEWIS
VAUGHAN

(Left to right): Todd Grabowski, Anthony Seiler, Aaron Lewis, Davin Sandhu of Johnson Controls

Johnson Controls executives underscore the company's three-pillar strategy as a key driver in meeting accelerating global hyperscale and colocation demands

As the global data centre industry undergoes unprecedented transformation, the rise of AI workloads is intensifying pressure on infrastructure and introducing new power and thermal management challenges.

To address these demands, Johnson Controls, a Fortune 500 leader in building technologies, is leveraging its Global Data Centre Solutions (GDCS) division to better support hyperscale operators and colocation providers.

With a worldwide footprint, the company is expanding its efforts to deliver integrated solutions across the thermal management chain, intelligent building automation, white glove service and parts availability, fire suppression and security.

"We've been involved in data centres now for over two decades and have seen the growth of data centres expanding globally," says Todd Grabowski, President of GDCS at Johnson Controls. "The formation of the Johnson Controls global data centre organisation has really been a customer-led initiative.

"As our customers were expanding globally, they were looking for partners that could expand with them and that had the scalability and local market presence to ensure successful data centre implementation."

“The formation of the Johnson Controls global data centre organisation has really been a customer-led initiative”

TODD GRABOWSKI

TITLE: PRESIDENT FOR GLOBAL DATA CENTER SOLUTIONS

Todd brings over 30 years of leadership at Johnson Controls and is President of Global Data Center Solutions, reporting to the CEO. With deep expertise in HVAC, he drives strategic growth and innovation across the data centre industry.

How Johnson Controls is breaking new ground in the data centre industry

With market dynamics accelerating demand for data centre infrastructure, cloud computing giants are scaling globally at an unprecedented pace. This rapid expansion is driving the need for facilities that deliver exceptional reliability and performance.

In response, Johnson Controls has structured its strategy around three foundational pillars:

- Innovation – fueling breakthrough product development to meet evolving technical demand
- Scalability – enabling global manufacturing capacity to support rapid deployment
- Consistency – ensuring uniform performance and quality across all regions

“We meaningfully want to participate in this market, drive this market and support this customer set,” says Austin Domenici, Vice President and General Manager of GDCS at Johnson Controls. “We don’t want to launch anything that we can’t do at quality or at scale so our customers can really trust what we’re doing.”

To realise its strategic ambitions, Johnson Controls has made significant investments – particularly in thermal innovation. At its specialised Johnson Controls Advanced Development Engineering Center (JADEC) testing facility in Pennsylvania, the company is rigorously evaluating equipment under extreme conditions to accelerate advancements in data centre technologies.

> **“We meaningfully want to participate in this market, drive this market and support this customer set”**
>
> **AUSTIN DOMENICI,**
> VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER OF GDCS, JOHNSON CONTROLS

“It’s a one-of-a-kind testing laboratory for chillers, for air handlers and most importantly their sub components,” explains Mihir Nandkeolyar, Business Development and Technology Strategy Manager Thermal Management at Johnson Controls. “It gives us the ability to test equipment across the full assembly to really understand the performance of the individual components in all sorts of unique applications within a data centre context.

“The ability for us to do that helps us rapidly innovate because we now know when something changes on a customer’s side, we know what component we need to change and can rapidly deploy that instead.”

Traditional product development cycles previously stretched three to

AUSTIN DOMENICI

TITLE: VP & GM FOR GLOBAL DATA CENTER SOLUTIONS ORGANIZATION

As Vice President and General Manager of the Data Center Solutions organisation, Austin Domenici is a strategic, cross-functional executive committed to advancing human and planetary health. A seasoned founder, operator, and P&L owner, he brings a proven track record of driving success across industries. With deep expertise in financial and business operations, Austin is focused on delivering measurable results- accelerating growth, reshaping business trajectories, and improving margins through thoughtful leadership and execution.

DAVIN SANDHU

TITLE: PORTFOLIO DIRECTOR FOR GLOBAL DATA CENTER SOLUTIONS

With expertise in portfolio management and strategic planning, Davin drives Johnson Controls' Global Data Center Solutions. With 20 years of leadership experience at JCI in HVAC, Controls, Security, and Fire, he brings a wealth of expertise.

five years, hiking up costs and delaying data centre projects. In order to facilitate faster innovation, Johnson Controls' efforts have compressed development timelines dramatically.

"We can flex NPI processes as quickly as six to nine months now to produce a new product that fits the needs of the data centre," says Aaron Lewis, CCO of GDCS at Johnson Controls. This acceleration enables rapid response to market changes. "We feel now that we have a strong case to bring our expertise to market to satisfy any solution."

Davin Sandhu, Global Portfolio Director, GDCS at Johnson Controls, explains: "We're really able to take a strong stance on the products that we provide and use them to be a unique data centre partner.

"We have a strong footprint in our chiller portfolio and our air handling unit portfolio to drive innovation."

> **"As data centres are becoming more densely populated from a power standpoint, we're able to continuously innovate new products and continue to leverage the scale that we have across the globe"**
>
> **DAVIN SANDHU,**
> PORTFOLIO DIRECTOR FOR GLOBAL DATA CENTER SOLUTIONS, JOHNSON CONTROLS

The company's YVAA chiller platform exemplifies this innovation approach. The product operates across all global climates without modification from -28°C to 59°C, whereas traditional air-cooled chillers require additional equipment for extreme temperatures.

With power usage effectiveness (PUE) targets becoming increasingly stringent, Johnson Controls says the YVAA platform helps clients meet these demanding standards consistently.

"A typical air-cooled chiller in the market will require some sort of water evaporation to work in some of the warmer climates," Mihir notes. "The YVAA platform eliminates these complications entirely and has the ability to run to both hot and low temperatures, allowing data centres to scale with a consistent known solution."

Manufacturing at unprecedented scale

AI is creating a broad range of heat-related challenges for data centres, particularly as graphics processing units (GPUs) generate enormous heat loads when running the technology.

In order to meet new demands – and to keep data centre emissions down – Johnson Controls has undertaken massive manufacturing expansion to meet surging demand. The company describes these investments as among the largest in its history, having increased production capacity across multiple facilities, particularly in air cooled and water cooled chillers.

"As data centres are becoming more densely populated from a power standpoint, we're able to continuously innovate new products and continue to leverage the scale that we have across the globe," Davin says.

Aaron adds: "We have seen significant expansions at multiple plants: for example, in the Americas regions, our air cooled chiller production has surged to nearly four times pre-data centre boom levels.

"What this has allowed us to do is satisfy a large number of customers as opposed to just a single customer and focusing the factory there."

Johnson Controls has also introduced an innovative capacity reservation system, allowing large clients to secure manufacturing slots based on projected demand. This forward-looking approach ensures greater supply chain predictability and delivers mutual value – optimising production planning for Johnson Controls while providing customers with enhanced delivery assurance.

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How Johnson Controls
is Changing the Tide in
the Data Centre Industry

Aaron adds: "It gives us an opportunity to feel comfortable in making the investment, but it gives our data centre clients confidence that we have the capacity – it's reserved for them and we'll deliver on time."

Delivering consistency at the global level

Currently, the company operates over 40 production facilities globally. Such a robust manufacturing footprint enables more localised production for regional markets, meaning that transportation costs and delivery times are reduced for the customer.

"Our worldwide presence means we can share all our knowledge between countries to make us more consistent and efficient in making critical decisions," says Jesús Antonio Martínez Sastre, BMS Business Director, Security and HVAC at Johnson Controls. "With this and applying continuous innovation, we achieve service excellence."

To enhance operational resilience, Johnson Controls has also embedded redundancy into its global manufacturing strategy. This means that if one facility experiences a disruption, production can be seamlessly shifted to alternate sites.

This built-in flexibility strengthens the company's ability to maintain continuity and ensures customers are protected against unforeseen supply chain interruptions.

> “It’s about having everybody on a central team to share best practices”

AARON LEWIS

TITLE: CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER FOR GLOBAL DATA CENTER SOLUTIONS

Aaron is the Chief Commercial Officer for Johnson Controls’ Global Data Center Solutions and leads the Direct HVAC Equipment field business for North America. With 17 years at JCI, he brings extensive leadership across sales, operations, and service in HVAC, Fire, and Security.

JOHNSON CONTROLS

JESUS MARTINEZ SASTRE

TITLE: DIVISION DIRECTOR FOR CFS IBERIA AND PORTUGAL AND CONTROLS DOMAIN FOR SOUTHERN EUROPE

With over 20 years of leadership at Johnson Controls, Jesus brings deep expertise in operations and commercial strategy. As Division Director of Installation and Service for Iberia, Portugal, and the Controls domain in Southern Europe, he has driven remarkable growth- tripling the CFS business in Iberia and Portugal- and led exponential expansion in data centre installation and service through innovative, integrated approaches.

The secret to Johnson Controls' success is its consistency, with every facility around the world requiring identical performance.

"Our ability to deliver the same technical solution, whether that location is in Phoenix, Arizona, Scotland, Dubai or Singapore allows our customers to have predictability of how those systems will perform," Todd explains. "This then leads into scalability – having both the capital infrastructure to build our solutions and the field infrastructure to implement solutions."

He adds: "When you think about the scale our customers are building at, then you start to see some of the restrictions of that growth. Partners like Johnson Controls are able to come in and help these customers overcome these challenges by providing innovative solutions that reduce the power consumption on the cold chain and reduce water usage rates, for example."

The company consolidated previously separate regional teams three years ago in order to create a more unified approach.

"These teams had vast knowledge about data centres, but only through the lens of their specific customers," Aaron explains. "It's about having everybody on a central team to share best practices. It's been a blessing to how we can support customers."

Jesús adds: "We devote many resources and hours to actively listening to the customer. Once we understand their needs, protocols and procedures, we are able to create an ecosystem and manage to offer the most advanced service that exists today for the data centre segment."

As a result, Johnson Controls' customer relationships have evolved beyond traditional transactional arrangements. The company embeds engineers directly in client design processes, with these partnerships typically spanning 12 to 18 months before commercial agreements.

Likewise, service standards have been elevated to match data centre criticality levels, as mission-critical facilities demand immediate attention.

"The SLAs are much faster. It's two to four hours to respond instead of two to four days," Aaron explains.

Johnson Controls maintains over 40,000 field-based employees globally to support these commitments.

> **"Our worldwide presence means we can share all our knowledge between countries to make us more consistent and efficient in making critical decisions"**
>
> **JESUS MARTINEZ SASTRE,**
> DIVISION DIRECTOR FOR CFS IBERIA AND PORTUGAL AND CONTROLS DOMAIN FOR SOUTHERN EUROPE,
> JOHNSON CONTROLS

Building the future of hyperscale growth

Data centre operators face multiple constraints as they scale operations, including power availability, the thermal race to the chip, water usage and skills gaps.

As data centres get closer to driving more heat away from the chip, they are now leveraging liquid cooling – but Davin explains that, in order for the hyperscalers to achieve greater rack density, the data centres are likely to need other methods or refrigerants to make this possible.

“As we continue to innovate, Johnson Controls is able to bring a lot of value in understanding how to approach the problem of pulling as much heat away from the chip and then driving that solution forward,” Davin says. “Customers want a solution that’s reliable and tested by a company like Johnson Controls so they can scale across their facility.”

Todd adds: “Partners like Johnson Controls are able to come in and help customers overcome some of those challenges. We want to be thermal experts to allow our customers to utilise their resources more to power up the chips that they get their revenue from.”

The company’s innovation strategy focuses on working directly with the customer to reduce power consumption across its cooling systems. As more efficient thermal management frees electricity for revenue-generating computing equipment, every watt saved on cooling increases available computing capacity.

“It is essential to have a deep knowledge of the client’s facilities, procedures and internal protocols,” Jesús explains. “To achieve this, we work directly and daily with them, continuously optimising the action protocols.

“In this way, in the event of any contingency, a faster solution will be achieved without affecting the service.”

-28°C TO 59°C

The company’s YVAA chiller platform exemplifies this innovation approach. The product operates across all global climates without modification from -28°C to 59°C, whereas traditional air-cooled chillers require additional equipment for extreme temperatures.

Building tomorrow’s infrastructure today

As the data centre industry continues to evolve at an extraordinary pace – bringing infrastructure closer to end users – global sustainability requirements are becoming increasingly stringent.

Positioning itself as a comprehensive partner in this transformation, Johnson Controls says it supports both the rapid growth of AI and the imperative for environmental responsibility. With its deep expertise spanning thermal management, fire suppression, security systems and intelligent building automation, the company delivers

> “The YVAA platform has the ability to run to both hot and low temperatures, allowing data centres to scale”

MIHIR NANDKEOLYAR

TITLE: DATACENTER GLOBAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MGR, GLOBAL DATA CENTER SOLUTIONS

Mihir Nandkeolyar has been in the HVAC industry, and closely supporting the data centre thermal management vertical for 12 years. In prior roles, Mihir managed Applications Engineering teams in APAC and the Americas. He currently leads technology strategy and business development for thermal management within the Global Data Center Solutions business unit at Johnson Controls.

ANTHONY SEILER

TITLE: STRATEGY AND GTM DIRECTOR FOR GLOBAL DATA CENTER SOLUTIONS

Anthony specialises in strategy and innovation for go-to-market (GTM) motions within Johnson Controls' Global Data Center Solutions. His global scope ensures alignment with customers as the business scales and expands in this high-growth industry.

fully integrated solutions tailored to the complex needs of modern data centres.

"We want to become the market leading innovative experts globally within the data centre market on how we optimise the cold chain," Todd says. "Our vision is to be the thermal experts that allow our customers to utilise their resources more to power up the chips that they get their revenue from."

Anthony Seiler, Industry Director for GDCS at Johnson Controls, emphasises the company's global ambitions further: "We're not just at the table for what we offer, but for the clarity, the speed and the expertise we bring when it matters most."

The partnership approach extends beyond equipment supply, with Johnson Controls providing lifecycle services throughout facility operation – including predictive maintenance and optimisation services to ensure continued peak performance throughout the data centre.

Likewise, the testing capabilities at the JADEC facility enable validation of next-generation solutions, with the company collaborating with customers and other industry stakeholders to help anticipate risks and drive innovation ahead.

Ultimately, the comprehensive approach of Johnson Controls means it can address the full spectrum of data centre requirements. From initial design to optimisation and scaling, it offers integrated expertise from start to finish – with its holistic approach giving it a competitive edge.

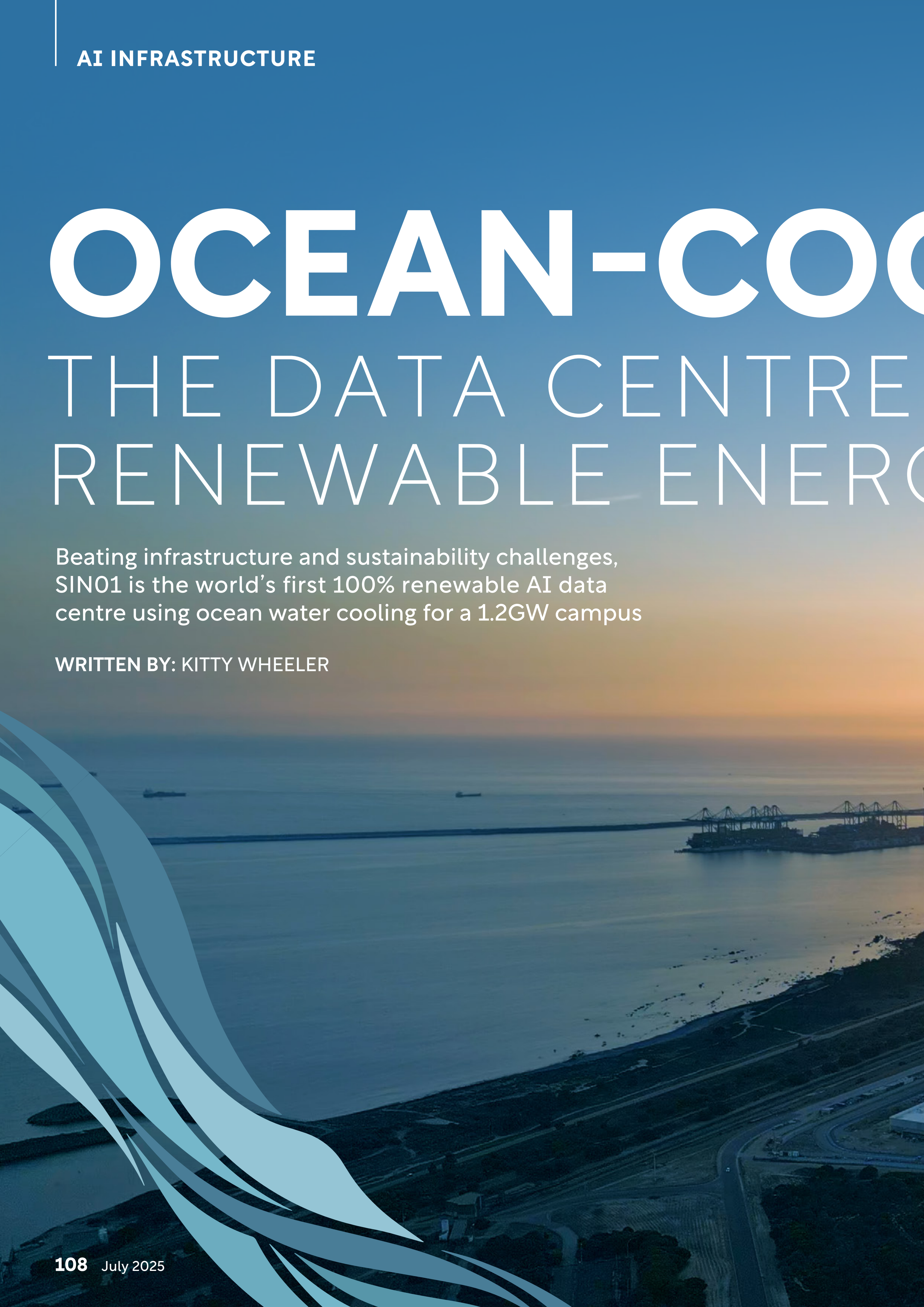
"We're engineering outcomes in one of the most dynamic industries on the planet," Anthony adds. "Innovation is how we stay ahead."

Todd says: "Our relationship with our customers is not transactional. It's that intimacy that sets us apart." ○

> **"Our core strategy is to be the most trusted partner across the entire data centre lifecycle – from design and construction to optimisation and sustainability"**
>
> **ANTHONY SEILER**
> STRATEGY AND GTM DIRECTOR FOR GLOBAL DATA CENTER SOLUTIONS, JOHNSON CONTROLS

RELIABLE AND EFFICIENT AT ALL STAGES

Johnson Controls delivers a comprehensive, end-to-end portfolio tailored for data centres – spanning thermal management, security, fire suppression and intelligent building automation. Backed by lifecycle service expertise, Johnson Controls ensures these integrated solutions perform reliably and efficiently from design through ongoing operations.



OCEAN-CO

THE DATA CENTRE RENEWABLE ENER

Beating infrastructure and sustainability challenges, SIN01 is the world's first 100% renewable AI data centre using ocean water cooling for a 1.2GW campus

WRITTEN BY: KITTY WHEELER

OLED AI:

REDEFINING
GY

The industrial port town of Sines, Portugal, has quietly become home to one of Europe's most ambitious technology projects to date.

Here, on repurposed land where a decommissioned power station once stood, Schneider Electric and Start Campus have constructed SIN01 – a 26MW AI data centre that is the first phase of a planned 1.2GW campus designed specifically for AI workloads.

What sets this facility apart isn't just its scale, but its fresh approach to sustainability. SIN01 is the world's first AI data centre to use ocean water as its primary cooling method, drawing directly from the Atlantic and returning it just one degree warmer.

For those who witnessed its journey from concept to reality, the transformation has been remarkable.

"The first time I discussed this project was in 2021 – and at that time, people did not believe in it," recalls Pablo Ruiz Escribano, Senior Vice President of Secure Power and Data Centre Business at Schneider Electric Europe.

"Some people were even making fun of the concept. Now five years later, being in my new position, I started the new role in March and the first event I did was in Iberia, opening this data centre.

"For me it is really emotional. Emotional because it was an idea and now it's a reality."

How SIN01 tackles the AI infrastructure challenge

The challenge of accommodating AI workload demands in a sustainable way has grown from concern to a global issue.

Traditional facilities, designed for steady workloads, now struggle to accommodate the intensive processing demands of AI applications – and the challenge now extends beyond raw computational power to the fundamental architecture of how data centres operate.

"When you look at the difference between an AI data centre and a traditional one, the main difference is in the cooling," Pablo explains.

"The difference is in how you cool down and extract the heat because the heat is higher. The size of the data hall we had usually had 150 racks – and the power was pretty much around one dot between one mega to two megas per two, two and a half megas.

"Now in the same size, we are able to bring much more IT capacity, but it is pretty much the same look and feel. The only difference is how you extract the heat."

As liquid cooling emerges as the preferred solution for high-density AI workloads, traditional data centre operators face infrastructure overhauls as well cost implications – especially since cooling typically accounts for 60% of a data centre's operational expenditure, with half of that energy consumption directly linked to cooling solutions.

"The more you can optimise the cooling piece, the more efficient you can be," Pablo says.

The blueprint for sustainable AI infrastructure

The other genius of Start Campus's approach lies in its integration with existing infrastructure.

Rather than constructing an entirely new facility, the developers recognised the potential of repurposing the decommissioned power station's maritime connections.

The facility utilises solutions from Schneider Electric's EcoStruxure portfolio, providing real-time monitoring and control systems that optimise energy usage across the entire operation.

CREDIT: SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

"It's amazing how integrated it is and leveraging the piping system that was taking water from the sea to cool down the power plant that has been decommissioned," Pablo says.

"You don't need to rebuild from scratch full infrastructure. It's just adapting it – and the fact that it's also using water coming from the regasification plant that was thrown away, cold water thrown away, then they're reusing it for this purpose.

"Also, the heat that we're extracting from the data centre can be reused in other applications close by."

PABLO RUIZ ESCRIBANO

TITLE: SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF SECURE POWER AND DATA CENTRE BUSINESS AT SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC EUROPE

COMPANY: SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

INDUSTRY: ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

Pablo Ruiz Escribano leads Schneider Electric's Secure Power and Data Centre Business across Europe, prioritising AI-ready, energy-efficient solutions for resilient, sustainable digital infrastructure at scale.

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This means that the environmental monitoring programme surrounding the facility is comprehensive and ongoing.

"We do have two research institutes that are monitoring and they're monitoring not only chemicals and the physical side of the water discharge, but the impact on the ecosystem," says India Oliveira, Sustainability Manager at Start Campus. "The two researchers, biologists and engineers, have scuba diving events every other month and every quarter they have a pre-report for us.

INDIA OLIVEIRA

TITLE: SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER AT START CAMPUS

COMPANY: START CAMPUS

INDUSTRY: RENEWABLE ENERGY

India Oliveira is Sustainability Manager at Start Campus, driving eco-conscious strategies for digital infrastructure. She is passionate about innovative and sustainable AI platform solutions in high-growth, energy-intensive technology environments.

> **“AI is an industrial revolution like electricity was or steam in the past”**
>
> **PABLO RUIZ ESCRIBANO,**
> SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF SECURE POWER AND DATA CENTRE BUSINESS AT SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC EUROPE, SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

“It is part of our environmental impact assessment requirements. So we do have to present a massive proposal for compensation measures. They told us a minimum of three years, but we’re committed to the full lifecycle of the project, so 25 years minimum.”

Furthermore, the research findings have already validated the environmental approach, with India adding: “These researchers predict that the one degree Celsius and the plume of influence is very small.

“The discharge is very concentrated in this area on the discharge area and the bay, but it diffuses a lot. So we don’t release any chemicals. We are releasing warmer water, which will have some impact – but there will be some wildlife who will benefit and others that will probably migrate to other places – yet the predicted impact is minimal.”

AI at SIN01: From tracking sustainability to predicting it

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of SIN01 lies in how AI itself has become integral to both its construction and operation.

“AI is an industrial revolution like electricity was or steam in the past,” Pablo says.

“Now it’s AI with the IT revolution revolutionising every single industry – and the way we build data centres.”

AI is everywhere at SIN01, from assisting the construction and operations, to the robo-guard dog that greets visitors, takes pictures of the site and automatically compares them to 3D models to see how the site is operating the data centre, to predicting the site’s future sustainability goals.

"Now if we want to be efficient, to save CO2 emissions and to increase the reliability of the data centre, we should just send people onsite when it is really needed," Pablo continues.

"We are applying AI to see whether the equipment is aging in the proper way, or if there is a deviation that triggers some activities from the FSRs or from the field services engineer, to take action to repair it."

Start Campus has also developed perhaps the most sophisticated application of AI in sustainable data centre design: a comprehensive carbon modelling system integrated into their Building Information Model (BIM).

This system is a fundamental shift in how environmental impact is assessed and managed throughout a facility's lifecycle.

"I think that the most impactful aspect of the sustainability design really is the groundbreaking carbon model integrated into our BIM design – the Building Infrastructure Model," India says.

"We can, through layers, have a clear view of which infrastructure has the most emissions or most carbon impact through scope one, two and three. So I think having built this unique system using this BIM system means we can predict the emissions and then reorder any other material or look at local suppliers.

"We can test the emissions before we actually start building."

The system's sophistication additionally extends to detailed supply chain analysis.

"For example, we had one option of steel structure. There's a huge database that gives us their own raw material sourcing, how much travel needs to happen to come here, what are the materials that they use, their energy – is it renewable, is it diesel -based, etc – and all of these little aspects are implemented in this BIM system," India continues.

"We can then change materials in order to see, as a cost-benefit analysis. We can look at how much emissions we can avoid by paying more or less."

> **“With AI, we can test emissions before we actually start building”**
>
> **INDIA OLIVEIRA,**
> SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER
> AT START CAMPUS,
> START CAMPUS

Start Campus and Schneider Electric: Transparency being the secret to success

The relationship between Schneider Electric and Start Campus exemplifies how traditional infrastructure companies are adapting to AI’s demands – as their collaboration extends further than hardware supply to comprehensive consulting services.

“From the very beginning, it’s been an open discussion,” Pablo explains. “One of the things that I like about the partnership is that Start Campus were putting some challenges on the table and we were discussing the solution.

“For example, at that time we didn’t have a strong position on liquid cooling and they worked with an alternative supplier.”

“Now, we have incorporated liquid cooling into our portfolio.”

The facility’s designation as a Project of National Interest by the Portuguese government also reflects its broader economic significance.

Start Campus plans to create up to 1,200 direct jobs and an estimated 9,000 indirect roles throughout the project’s duration. The company additionally recently

> **“SIN01 shows how quickly AI is coming up and that it can help”**
>
> **INDIA OLIVEIRA,**
> SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER
> AT START CAMPUS,
> START CAMPUS

announced an €8.5bn (US$8.8bn) investment to accelerate campus development.

Furthermore, Portugal’s strategic advantages extend to competitive energy costs compared to other European markets, backed by significant renewable energy capacity – and this combination has enabled Start Campus to secure over 1GW of grid power – a rare achievement in a European market where power availability constraints have become the primary limiting factor for data centre growth.

The future of AI data centre infrastructure

As the AI revolution accelerates, the construction methodology pioneered at SIN01 is already influencing how the industry approaches large-scale deployment. The traditional approach of on-site construction is proving inadequate for the speed and scale demanded by AI infrastructure development.

“What we see is that the way we’re constructing data centres doesn’t change the equipment itself, but the way that we build data centres,” Pablo says. “ We are moving into more standardised and more prefabricated solutions so we can, when deploying such a large infrastructure, see logistics become a real topic.

“The more you can standardise, the more you can really replicate standard modules – and the faster you’re going to be able to deploy onsite, the more you’re going to reduce the time to start up and commission the data centres.”

He continues: “If you go to a traditional data centre that is under construction, you see plumbers working with electricians and a lot of people interfering at the same time.

“If you want to deploy at scale with the speed that we need, it’s no longer possible to have that traditional way of building. So moving in with the same equipment, but having these standardised and prefabricated solutions for me is the only way to do it.

“Which by the way, also reduces the CO2 emissions because you can simplify all the logistic flows and you can also optimise those logistic flows.”

How SIN01 has achieved balancing growth with responsibility

The integration of AI workloads into SIN01 has actually improved its environmental efficiency.

“When we first designed this building, we didn’t have AI in our model or in our slogan,” India explains.

Yet when discussing that SIN01 is built largely off existing infrastructure, she says: “A year later, AI comes and we say, right, let’s do an expansion. Why? Because building creates emissions, full stop – but the impact on power usage, for example, is not equivalent to the additional workload. It’s the same space.

“The environmental impact is already studied. So all of the compensation measures are done based on the demand from the energy grid, but the physical space that this occupies: the habitats, the seawater monitoring, all of the bird watching and mitigation strategies that we have put in place for noise pollution – wouldn’t change having AI or having more IT capacity, because we already predict the impact itself on the place.”

This perspective – that AI can increase computing density without proportionally increasing environmental impact – offers a path forward for an industry grappling with sustainability pressures.

As India puts it: “SIN01 shows how quickly AI is coming up and that it can help. How do we have AI in the same space? We’re using AI to put AI inside the racks.”

When asked to summarise the whole project in one word, Pablo concludes: “For me it’s disruption. SIN01 is a clear example of how we can build data centres in a completely different way – and I’m proud because we’ve been part of it.”

STOP!

Rockwell
Automation

AI'S POWER FOR MANUFACTURIN

R SUSTAINABLE
G

AD FEATURE

WRITTEN BY:
KITTY WHEELER

PRODUCED BY:
LEWIS VAUGHAN

Rockwell Automation uses AI to drive sustainability across global manufacturing, achieving reduced emissions and waste, and optimising resource use

Sustainability, a rarely discussed concept just a few decades ago, has become one of the most urgent challenges facing the world today.

As global demand for sustainable solutions rises in every sector, businesses are increasingly turning to AI to unlock new ways to address these challenges.

From saving thousands of tons of CO_2 every year, to detecting diseases in agriculture, AI is now accelerating sustainability goals big and small.

Each sector faces different sustainability challenges, but manufacturing is one of the most challenging industries to make sustainable – and this is where Andrea Ruotolo comes in.

As the Global Head of Customer Sustainability at Rockwell Automation, the industrial automation and digital transformation company, she leads initiatives that embed sustainability into manufacturing operations.

Focused on bridging advanced technology with environmental impact, she helps companies reduce their environmental footprint by using industrial automation, AI and data analytics – improving enterprises' operational performance and profitability.

ANDREA RUOTOLO

TITLE: GLOBAL HEAD OF CUSTOMER SUSTAINABILITY

Andrea Ruotolo is a globally recognised leader in digital transformation, responsible AI and industrial sustainability, serving as the President for the Global Council for Responsible AI.

As the Global Head of Customer Sustainability at Rockwell Automation, she drives innovation for Fortune 100 companies across energy and manufacturing, impacting millions of employees and hundreds of billions in revenue.

With two decades of executive leadership across the Americas, Europe and Asia, Andrea blends entrepreneurial vision with intrapreneurial execution to scale cutting-edge technologies and uncover high-value strategic opportunities.

She holds a Fulbright Doctorate in sustainability, two master's degrees and advanced credentials in AI Organisational Strategy from MIT and Harvard Business School.

Andrea Ruotolo,
Global Head of
Customer Sustainability,
Rockwell Automation

"AI has revolutionised our sustainability efforts by enabling smarter, real-time decision-making," she says.

What makes Rockwell Automation's approach to AI for sustainability unique?

Rockwell Automation doesn't just use technologies, but creates them to connect people, processes and machines to make industries more intelligent and sustainable.

This holistic approach serves manufacturers across diverse sectors, from automotive to food production.

Andrea operates at a personal level, working closely with customers to translate complex sustainability trends into actionable business value, including reducing emissions, improving energy efficiency and optimising resource use across industrial operations.

Taking her passion further, she also serves as President for Canada on the Global Council for Responsible AI. This international body comprises experts and policymakers working to ensure AI development aligns with ethical and sustainable standards.

She has also contributed to the Responsible AI Institute's white paper 'Bridging the Gap: The Confluence of AI and ESG in a Responsible World', which advocates for integrating AI with environmental, social and governance frameworks.

"At the intersection of digital transformation and environmental stewardship, my work is about shaping the future of industry," she explains.

With a broad approach to sustainability, Andrea focuses on enabling industrial

> **"These AI capabilities allow us to shift from reactive to proactive sustainability"**
>
> **ANDREA RUOTOLO,**
> GLOBAL HEAD OF CUSTOMER SUSTAINABILITY,
> ROCKWELL AUTOMATION

Rockwell Automation

operations that are smart, connected, responsible and resilient. This philosophy fuels the development of AI-powered sustainability solutions.

Furthermore, the company's AI tools are built into and integrate with its industrial automation systems.

What's special about these tools is that they allow manufacturers to predict equipment failures, reduce downtime and cut waste and energy usage across production lines.

The sustainable power of predictive analytics

Rockwell's FactoryTalk Analytics LogixAI is an advancement in manufacturing intelligence. It embeds machine learning (ML) directly into Allen-Bradley ControlLogix and CompactLogix controllers, enabling real-time predictive analytics without requiring extensive data science expertise.

driving sustainability

The system also allows operators to make immediate adjustments to manufacturing processes – enhancing process efficiency and product quality whilst reducing environmental impact.

"These AI capabilities allow us to shift from reactive to proactive sustainability," Andrea says.

Traditional manufacturing approaches identify problems after they occur, whereas Rockwell's AI-powered systems can prevent issues before they impact production, reducing waste and energy consumption. For instance, FactoryTalk Energy Manager provides energy monitoring across plant, process area, line and machine levels. Built on the FactoryTalk DataMosaix platform, it identifies energy consumption patterns and enables targeted reduction strategies.

The system captures and analyses energy consumption data at device and process levels – and this granular visibility allows operators to make informed adjustments to motors, process parameters and energy-intensive areas.

"This synergy gives operators the power to make immediate, informed adjustments," Andrea continues.

The integration delivers measurable results, proven by manufacturers reporting lower emissions, reduced waste and higher product quality through real-time optimisation.

HOW ROCKWELL USES AI TO SAVE ENERGY

Rockwell's collaboration with Eastern Municipal Water District in California integrated AI into wastewater treatment operations, resulting in a 31% reduction in aeration energy use.

Rockwell's FactoryTalk Analytics LogixAI embeds ML directly into industrial controllers, enabling real-time predictive analytics and allowing operators to make immediate process adjustments.

AI's role in water treatment to achieve energy savings

Rockwell's collaboration with Eastern Municipal Water District also demonstrates the potential of intelligence-enabled control and machine learning to help save energy, reduce costs and improve quality.

The California-based utility integrated AI into its wastewater treatment operations and achieved a 31% reduction in aeration energy use – which then delivered benifits across cost, quality and the use of chemicals.

"This not only led to significant cost savings but also improved effluent quality and reduced chemical usage," Andrea says.

The project also required minimal staff intervention, demonstrating how embedded AI can optimise processes autonomously. It continuously monitors and adjusts operations based on real-time conditions.

Aeration is a major energy expense in wastewater treatment, so the AI system's ability to reduce the consumption by nearly one-third demonstrates the potential for scaling similar improvements across industrial operations.

Sustainable food production through AI automation

Meanwhile, in the food industry, Andrea says she is "particularly inspired" by Rockwell Automation's collaboration with Meati Foods, a company producing sustainable meat alternatives from mushroom root, to scale production efficiently.

> “We’re also advancing responsible AI frameworks to ensure that as these tools scale, they do so ethically and transparently”
>
> **ANDREA RUOTOLO,**
> GLOBAL HEAD OF CUSTOMER SUSTAINABILITY,
> ROCKWELL AUTOMATION

The collaboration involved Cybertrol Engineering, a Rockwell Automation Gold-level System Integrator Partner that implements advanced automation and control systems.

The integration streamlined Meati’s operations whilst significantly reducing energy consumption and waste.

“The project exemplifies how AI and automation can be harnessed to promote sustainable manufacturing practices,” Andrea explains.

Partnerships like this are becoming more important as the food production sector faces increasing pressure to reduce environmental impact whilst meeting growing demand – yet Rockwell Automation’s solutions can help companies achieve both objectives simultaneously.

Meati’s mushroom-based protein production requires precise

Rockwell Automation
FIRE EXTINGUISHER
DISCOVER SUS
in your own backyard

expanding
ACCE
TAINABILITY
EXPLORE BY PHASE

environmental controls and Rockwell's automated systems monitor and adjust conditions continuously, optimising growth whilst minimising resource consumption.

How AI works for Rockwell's own sustainability applications

Rockwell also applies its AI-powered solutions to its own operations, tracking energy usage, carbon emissions and other performance indicators across its facilities.

The company uses FactoryTalk Energy Manager to achieve this monitoring of its production operations.

These tools provide granular visibility into operational efficiency opportunities. Improvements include optimising lighting, improving heating and cooling efficiency and fine-tuning manufacturing lines.

"By applying the same solutions we offer to our customers, we demonstrate integrity and set an example," Andrea says.

Rockwell's responsible AI governance frameworks

Addressing the common challenge of AI implementation into older systems, Rockwell's AI offerings integrate seamlessly into existing industrial control and automation platforms.

The integration enables real-time insights without requiring extensive data science expertise from manufacturing teams.

FactoryTalk Analytics GuardianAI provides predictive maintenance

Analytics Augmented Modeler
Dashboard
Running Anomaly Detection
Settings
Diagnose
Actual
Predicted
XY Plot

capabilities. These monitor equipment conditions using existing data from variable frequency drives and alert maintenance teams to potential issues before they cause unplanned downtime.

The proactive approach optimises asset utilisation and extends equipment lifespan. Meanwhile predictive maintenance reduces waste associated with premature equipment replacement and emergency repairs.

Enabling data-driven sustainability measurements

It is well known that manufacturing companies increasingly require granular data to support sustainability reporting and compliance requirements.

Addressing this particular challenge, Rockwell Automation's AI solutions provide the detailed metrics necessary for environmental impact assessment through capabilities including FactoryTalk Energy Manager.

This solution delivers comprehensive energy monitoring capabilities across multiple operational levels and tracks consumption patterns from individual machines to entire production facilities.

As a result, the visibility enables manufacturers to identify inefficiencies and optimise energy usage systematically.

This allows companies to target specific areas for improvement based on data-driven insights rather than assumptions.

Additionally, the system's integration with existing automation infrastructure reduces implementation complexity.

Andrea emphasises the importance of measurable outcomes in sustainability initiatives, as the data-driven approach allows companies to demonstrate concrete environmental improvements to stakeholders and regulatory bodies.

How AI will accelerate the future of sustainable manufacturing

Through research focusing on expanding ML applications across diverse manufacturing processes and environmental challenges, Rockwell Automation continues developing AI capabilities that address emerging sustainability requirements.

As well as existing AI-driven sustainability improvements, Andrea's role involves identifying new opportunities too – including exploring applications in waste reduction, water conservation and circular economy principles within manufacturing operations.

Partnerships are a considerable way that Rockwell advances AI technologies for sustainability, developing solutions that address specific environmental challenges across manufacturing sectors.

Looking to the future, emerging regulations require manufacturers to demonstrate measurable sustainability progress – and Rockwell's AI platforms provide the monitoring and optimisation capabilities necessary for compliance with evolving environmental standards.

Andrea envisions AI systems that automatically adjust manufacturing processes based on real-time environmental impact assessments.

"We're also advancing responsible AI frameworks to ensure that as these tools scale, they do so ethically and transparently," she says.

"Our mission is to combine the imaginations of people with the potential of technology to expand what is humanly possible.

"We are deeply committed to responsible innovation and shaping responsible AI practices, recognising the convergence of AI and ESG as a critical area for future development."

> **"AI has revolutionised our sustainability efforts by enabling smarter, real-time decision-making"**
>
> **ANDREA RUOTOLO,**
> GLOBAL HEAD OF CUSTOMER SUSTAINABILITY,
> ROCKWELL AUTOMATION

FWD
ENET LINK
EtherNet/IP
FAULT
Esc
Sel
PowerFlex
525
Allen-Bradley

Will iPhone Designer Sir Jony Ive's OpenAI Move Hurt Apple?

Apple designer **Sir Jony Ive** has joined OpenAI with **Sam Altman** to lead the development of AI-native hardware and a new family of intelligent devices

WRITTEN BY: KITTY WHEELER

CREDIT: OPENAI

Sir Jony Ive, former Apple executive, with Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI

AI systems can now see, think and understand language – yet users still interact with them through keyboards and touchscreens designed for an older era.

This disconnect has created fierce competition amongst technology companies to develop the first truly AI-native hardware.

But as innovative devices roll out across leading tech giants, from smartphones to Vision Pro headsets, AI develops again and again – and now, the challenge for the companies is increasing pressure to identify hardware opportunities beyond smartphones as AI evolution only speeds up.

However, as a result of this disconnect between AI potential and user experience, a rare opportunity has blossomed for companies willing to be brave enough to reimagine how people interact with intelligent systems.

An Apple store in Tokyo, Japan

Spotting this opportunity, OpenAI has acquired io, a hardware startup founded by Sir Jony Ive, the former Apple design executive.

"I think we have the opportunity here to kind of completely re-imagine what it means to use a computer," Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, says.

The risk and reward for OpenAI

According to the BBC, Apple shares fell more than 2% following the merger announcement, reflecting investor concerns about competitive threats to the technology company's hardware business – but Sam's vision is optimistic: "AI is an incredible technology, but great tools require work at the intersection of technology, design and understanding people and the world.

"No one can do this like Jony and his team; the amount of care they put into every aspect of the process is extraordinary."

Sir Jony worked at Apple for more than 30 years and helped revive products including the iPhone and iPod.

OpenAI

OPENAI

HEADQUARTERS: SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 5.1K

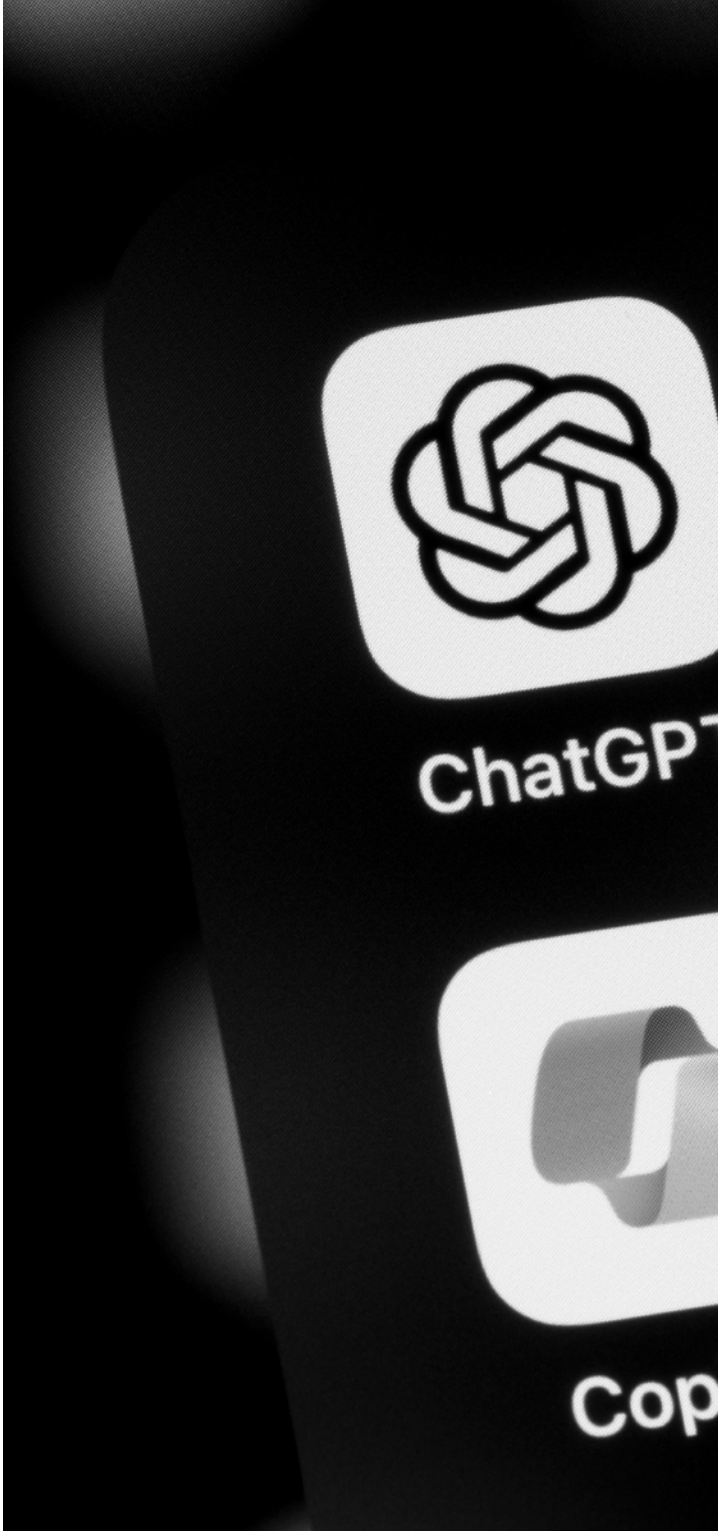
He then left the company in 2019 to start his own, LoveForm, which has worked with companies including Airbnb and Moncler.

Sir Jony and Sam wrote in a joint statement: “Two years ago, Jony Ive and the creative collective LoveFrom quietly began collaborating with Sam Altman and the team at OpenAI.

“A collaboration built upon friendship, curiosity and shared values quickly grew in ambition. Tentative ideas and explorations evolved into tangible designs.

“The ideas seemed important and useful. They were optimistic and hopeful. They were inspiring. They made everyone smile. They reminded us of a time when we celebrated human achievement, grateful for new tools that helped us learn, explore and create.

“It became clear that our ambitions to develop, engineer and manufacture a new family of products demanded an entirely new company. And so, one year ago, Jony founded io with Scott Cannon, Evans Hankey and Tang Tan.



“We gathered together the best hardware and software engineers, the best technologists, physicists, scientists, researchers and experts in product development and manufacturing. Many of us have worked closely for decades.”

Now, with Sir Jony and his team, Sam says the goal involves creating a “family of devices” designed specifically for AI applications.

Claude
Gemini
Perplexity
Poe
ilot

Sir Jony will assume design responsibilities across both OpenAI and io operations.

In the video announcing the merger, he said he believed the world was on the "brink of a new generation of technology."

Together, they will integrate the hardware development team with OpenAI's research and product divisions, which are based in San Francisco.

The 'companions' conversation

Already, an internal chat between Sam Altman and OpenAI staff has reportedly occurred where Sam is setting a target of shipping 100 million AI 'companions'.

This gadget is reportedly designed to be entirely aware of a user's surroundings and even their life. While they have mostly talked about a single device, Sam said it could be more of a "family of devices".

CREDIT: CHIP SOMODEVILLA

Sam Altman,
CEO
OpenAI

Sir Jony Ive, dubbed it "a new design movement".

Sam even reportedly told his team the OpenAI device is "the chance to do the biggest thing we've ever done as a company here" and after living with the prototype, says it will be "the coolest piece of technology that the world will have ever seen".

What will Sir Jony bring from Apple to OpenAI that's unique?

What is already unique about the collaboration is that it addresses fundamental limitations in current AI deployment methods.

Most AI applications operate through web browsers, mobile apps or software interfaces originally designed for traditional computing tasks. However, these approaches fail to leverage AI capabilities for natural interaction methods, including voice, gesture and contextual awareness.

This is where Sir Jony comes in: as a developer of consumer electronics at Apple, he provides expertise in manufacturing, supply chain management and product design at scale.

"I am reminded of a time, three decades ago, when I emigrated to America," he says.

"As a designer, I was drawn to the exhilarating and innocent optimism of Silicon Valley, to collaborate with people driven to create amazing products that elevate humanity."

> **“We are on the brink of a new generation of technology”**
>
> **SIR JONY IVE,**
> FOUNDER,
> LOVEFORM

While companies including Apple and Meta have demonstrated the commercial potential for hardware products that successfully integrate advanced technology with user experience design, OpenAI is doing something different.

Its hardware initiative differs from these approaches by focusing specifically on AI-native interfaces rather than adapting existing device categories.

Furthermore, the company’s access to advanced language models (LMs) and multimodal AI systems provides technical capabilities that were unavailable during previous hardware development cycles.

“What it means to use technology can change in a profound way,” Sam says.

“I hope we can bring some of the delight, wonder and creative spirit that I first felt using an Apple computer 30 years ago.”

While Sir Jony expresses anxiety and excitement about his new role, he says: “The values and vision of Sam and the teams at OpenAI and io are a rare inspiration.

“I have a growing sense that everything I have learned over the last 30 years has led me to this moment.”

Sir Jony Ive with Tim Cook, CEO of Apple

Castrol

A Masterclass in Data Centre Cooling Solutions

AD FEATURE

WRITTEN BY:
AMBER JACKSON

PRODUCED BY:
LEWIS VAUGHAN

00W

Global lubricant brand **Castrol** is using its expertise to pivot towards immersion cooling technology solutions for data centres handling increased AI demand

As data centre operators race to meet the growing computational demands of AI, they also face significant environmental challenges. How do they cool powerful hardware efficiently? Castrol may have found the answer.

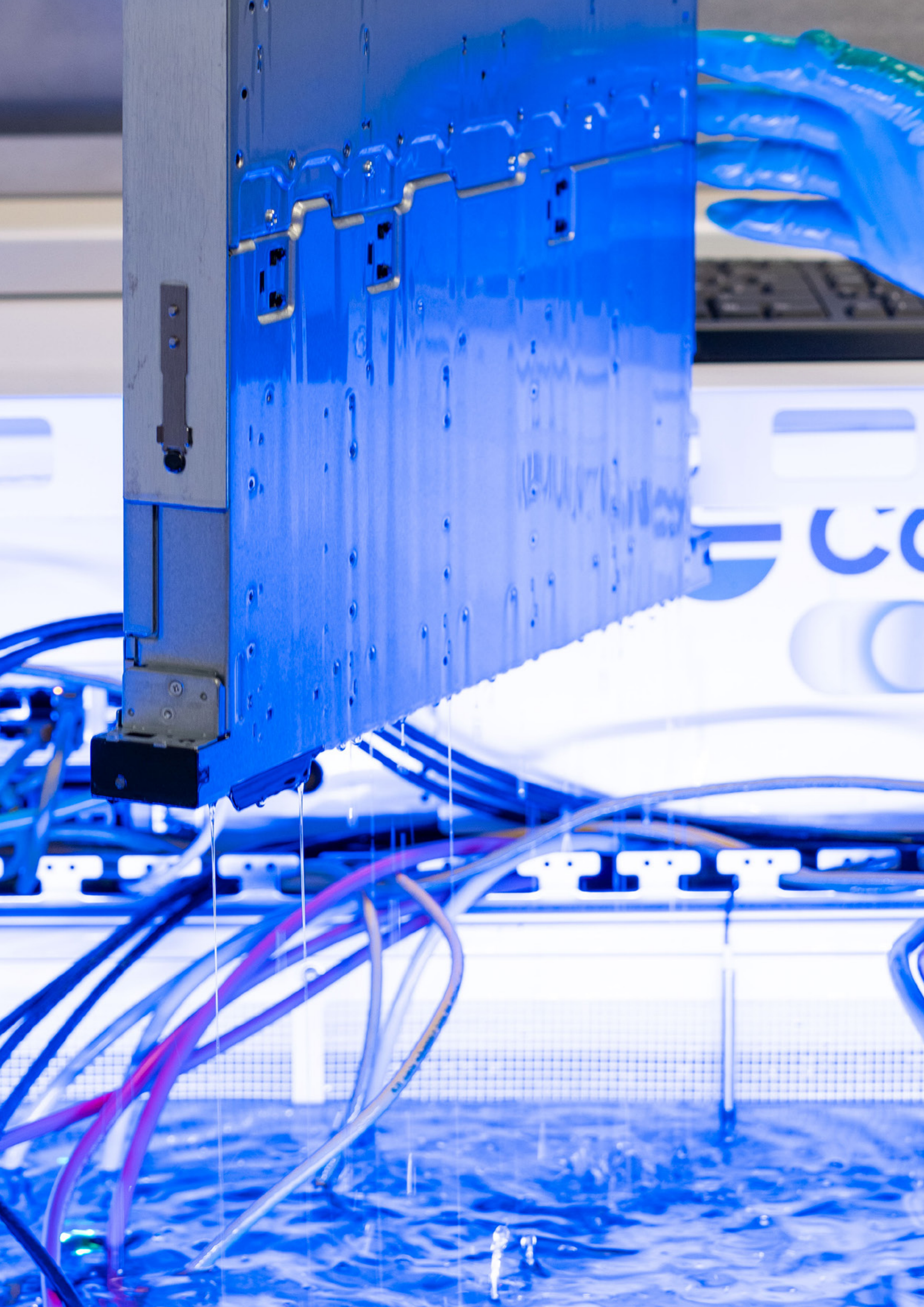
The global lubricant brand is now leveraging its 125+ years of fluid expertise in the automotive sector to develop cooling solutions for the data centre industry.

"We see an enormous opportunity in improving the thermal management of data centres," says Chris Lockett, Senior Vice President for Electrification and Castrol Products Innovation. "When we look at the way data centres are cooled today with air cooling, a significant amount of power is being utilised to keep the servers cool – up to 40% of the data centre's power."

The evolution away from air cooling

Immersion cooling involves submerging server components directly in dielectric fluids that conduct heat, but not electricity. For the data centre industry, moving away from traditional air cooling towards immersion cooling solutions represents a paradigm shift.

According to Stephen Zhao, Thermal Management Director for EMEA at Castrol,



MEET THE CASTROL EXPERTS

CHRIS LOCKETT

TITLE: SVP – ELECTRIFICATION & CASTROL PRODUCTS INNOVATION

COMPANY: CASTROL

Chris Lockett is a senior leader with more than 25 years' experience of leading technology teams around the world. Chris leads the global innovation team that are focused on research, development and commercialisation of electrification and differentiated Castrol products and offers.

SUNG KIM

TITLE: GLOBAL HEAD OF DATA CENTRE LIQUID COOLING SOLUTIONS

COMPANY: CASTROL

Sung A Kim is vastly experienced in the sector, and was previously the global lead for data centre and crypto currency immersion cooling fluids at Exxonmobil. She is the co-lead for Women in Open Compute Project (WOCP) and Sustainability Project co-lead at The Open Compute Project Foundation (OCP), whose mission is to apply the benefits of open source collaboration for innovation.

STEPHEN ZHAO

TITLE: THERMAL MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR FOR EMEA

COMPANY: CASTROL

Stephen Zhao leads the development of the liquid cooling business in Europe, Middle East, and Africa. He has many years of experience in the energy industry with expertise in solutions for the Data Centre industry. He has also held roles in academia, government, and the non-profit sector.

NICK BARRET

TITLE: SENIOR ENGINEER DATA CENTRE TESTING

COMPANY: CASTROL

Nick Barrett has been working for BP Castrol for more than 14 years over which time has developed bespoke test methods and capability for R&D of Castrol products. He has deep technical knowledge in thermal management solutions for liquid cooling.

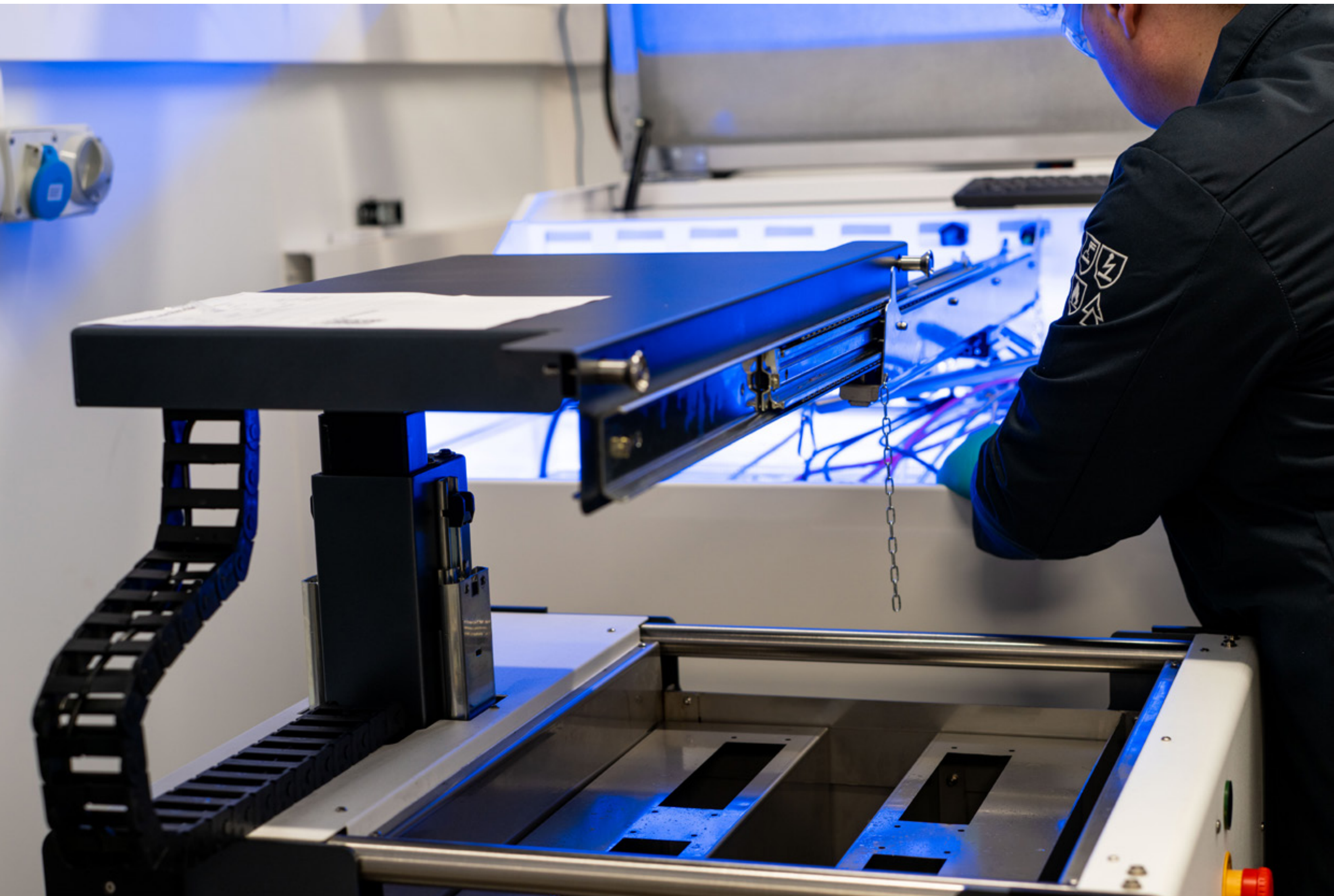
this cooling method dramatically decreases energy consumption. "You cut down on everything. The only thing you really operate is just the pumps on the tanks, and those pumps are not very strong," he says.

"Data centres themselves consume a lot of power. And from the traditional format of using air cooling to get the most efficient cooling method, you also need to consume a lot of water."

These resource demands inevitably create environmental challenges, as Stephen explains: "From the power and water perspective, you have a lot of impact, and then you also have land use as well."

Immersion cooling emerges as a critical solution during a turbulent time for the industry, as AI workloads threaten to continue increasing compute demand. The heat generated by these high-performance computing (HPC) components has outpaced what traditional cooling methods can deliver within the data centre.

"AI is driving a lot of changes as it requires high-performance CPUs and GPUs, which generate a lot of heat," says Sung Kim, Global Head of Data Centre Liquid Cooling Solutions at Castrol. "The data centre industry is mostly on air cooling design, which can cool up to only 50 kilowatts (kW), but that is not



enough for high-performance CPUs and GPUs required by AI.”

As processing power increases, what was once sufficient is now becoming a bottleneck for technology advancement.

Nick Barrett, Senior Engineer – Data Centre Testing at Castrol, points to the ongoing evolution of processing hardware: “All of those changes going on in the industry lead to higher-powered chips. We can do more work, but that means more heat generation.”

Using automotive expertise to drive data centre innovation

Castrol’s entry into the data centre cooling market builds upon its extensive thermal management experience in the automotive sector, particularly with electric vehicles (EVs). Now, the company is on a pathway of change, exploring opportunities to provide solutions and services that will complement its core lubricants business and provide more value to customers.

When it comes to data centres, Castrol is using dielectric fluids, using its experience with EV cooling systems to inform its approach to data centre cooling solutions. This has enabled Castrol to leverage its existing expertise in a new market.

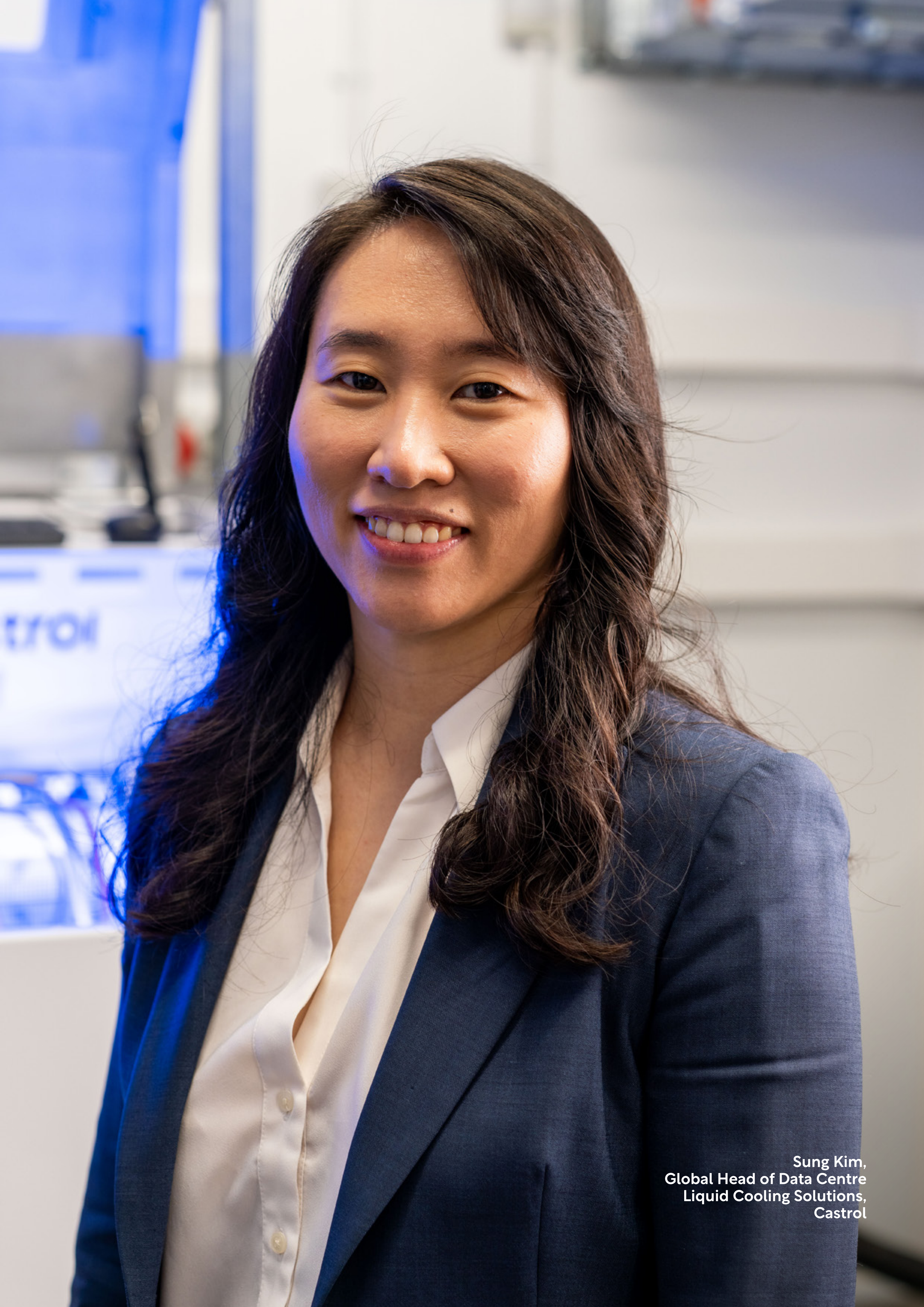
“We’ve been working with dielectric fluids for a long time,” Chris explains. “Our first EV fluid approval was back in 2013. Now we’ve got hundreds of EV fluid approvals around the world. Some of those EV fluids are immersion, dielectric fluids that we’re working on with EV OEMs in terms of immersion cooling their batteries.”

> **“What we offer is not just a fluid, but also the service, maintenance and refill as part of our complete solution”**
>
> **SUNG KIM,**
> HEAD OF DATA CENTRE
> LIQUID COOLING SOLUTIONS,
> CASTROL

Chris emphasises that this transition still aligns with Castrol’s traditional business approach: “It’s basically an extension of what we’ve always done, fluid interaction with an application. It’s now about understanding how our fluids can improve the performance of data centres.”

The company’s approach to data centre cooling reflects its broader business strategy, understanding data centre operators’ need for reliable, end-to-end mission-critical solutions.

Sung adds: “In terms of liquid cooling solutions from Castrol, what we offer is not just a fluid, but also the service, maintenance and refill as part of our complete solution.



Sung Kim,
Global Head of Data Centre
Liquid Cooling Solutions,
Castrol

“We have this opportunity of joint development and co-engineering with the customers, so not just developing our own fluid, but working closely with customers to understand their pain points.”

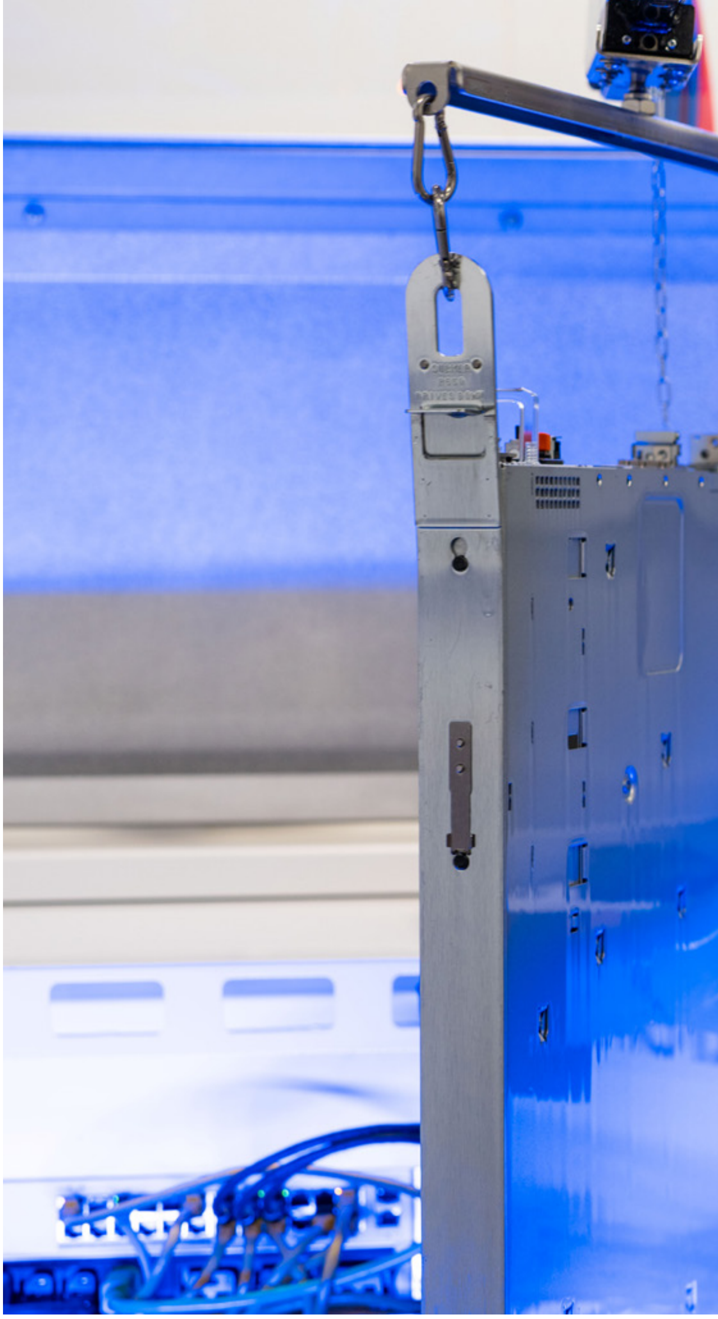
Powering the ecosystem with collaboration

When speaking with the Castrol team on site in Pangbourne in the UK, a recurring theme is the importance placed on the company’s partnerships. With immersion cooling changing how data centre hardware is deployed and managed, collaboration across multiple stakeholders is essential for success.

“Once you start moving into things like direct chip and immersion, you have fluid coming very close to the IT,” Stephen explains. “All the different components are going to be touched by the fluid – the tank, the pump, the CDU, the piping, the wires, the servers, the chips.

“This means all of the different industry components need to be comfortable with the idea of moving over. If one party is saying they’re not quite ready for that transition, that’s holding back the whole thing.”

Stephen elaborates on the ecosystem relationships that Castrol has cultivated: “From an immersion perspective, we have very good relationships with the technology environment. We work a lot with all the different chip companies, the cooling system manufacturers, server OEMs and many different component manufacturers.”



IMMERSION COOLING:

30%
energy saving

80%
water consumption reduction

(Source: Castrol)

PUMP
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> “As new technologies come along, it’s really important to find partners that you can collaborate with”
>
> **NICK BARETT,**
> SENIOR ENGINEER
> DATA CENTRE TESTING,
> CASTROL

These partnerships extend across the entire cooling infrastructure, with Castrol working very closely with cooling system manufacturers, those who make the immersion tanks and the people who make the servers. This approach puts Castrol at a competitive advantage to drive the industry forward.

“What also makes us a leader is the fact that we’re already quite active in data centre cooling,” Stephen adds.

Nick Barret,
Senior Engineer
Data Centre Testing,
Castrol

To address these challenges, Castrol has established partnerships with key players in the ecosystem. One such partnership is with Unicom Engineering, a company that designs liquid-cooled servers specifically for AI and machine learning environments.

Austin Hypes, Chief Technologist and VP of Engineering at Unicom Engineering, describes the partnership: “We are designing a whole series of liquid cooled servers, primarily for AI and machine learning environments. We require very high-performance dielectric fluids to cool our server designs.

“There is a lot of back and forth collaboration with Castrol. We have certain needs and characteristics of dielectric fluids to meet not just thermal performance, but signal integrity performance.”

Driving market confidence

To facilitate the industry’s transition to immersion cooling, Castrol has invested in a state-of-the-art testing facility at its Pangbourne technology campus. This facility is designed to demonstrate the company’s commitment to the data centre market.

“Overall on the technology campus, we’re actually investing up to £50m (US$60m) in building up new testing equipment,” Chris reveals. “We’ve built out this data centre wing with a number of different cells, where we’ve got different immersion cooling technology all working on our Castrol fluids.”

Stephen Zhao,
Thermal Management
Director for EMEA,
Castrol

> **“What also makes us a leader is the fact that we’re already quite active in cooling”**
>
> **STEPHEN ZHAO,**
> THERMAL MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR FOR EMEA, CASTROL

The facility serves as both a research and development centre and a demonstration site where customers can witness immersion cooling in action. This hands-on approach helps Castrol to address concerns about the new technology.

Sung explains: “Not a lot of companies have a facility like this. It really sets us apart from our competitors because we can do the co-engineering and joint development with all these strategic partners and customers.”

The facility is also designed to support the company’s co-engineering philosophy. Chris adds: “We’re not a company that makes a fluid, gives it to someone who’s going to use it, and says ‘let us know how it works.’ We very much like to co-engineer. That’s always been part of Castrol’s DNA. We’ve done that historically with car manufacturers and now with data centre companies and server manufacturers.”

Nick adds: “As new technologies come along, it’s really important to find partners that you can collaborate with, to get access to the latest and greatest equipment.

“Co-engineering means we can quantify and qualify our fluids with the latest and greatest equipment, but also work together to find out really in depth about how it’s working, why it’s working, or maybe why it doesn’t work.”

This collaborative approach to product development enables Castrol to refine its fluids based on real-world testing and feedback. It means that the company can identify potential issues before they affect customer deployments.

Austin explains how partners like Unicom are a critical part of this validation process: “Validation is critical because we are designing and selling fully warranted, certified solutions. These have to work for years. You can’t just take individual building blocks, put them together and assume they’re going to work.”

Moving beyond energy efficiency

While energy efficiency is a primary driver for immersion cooling adoption, the technology is also able to offer additional benefits that align with broader environmental goals in the data centre industry.

WATCH NOW
Castrol: A masterclass in data centre cooling solutions

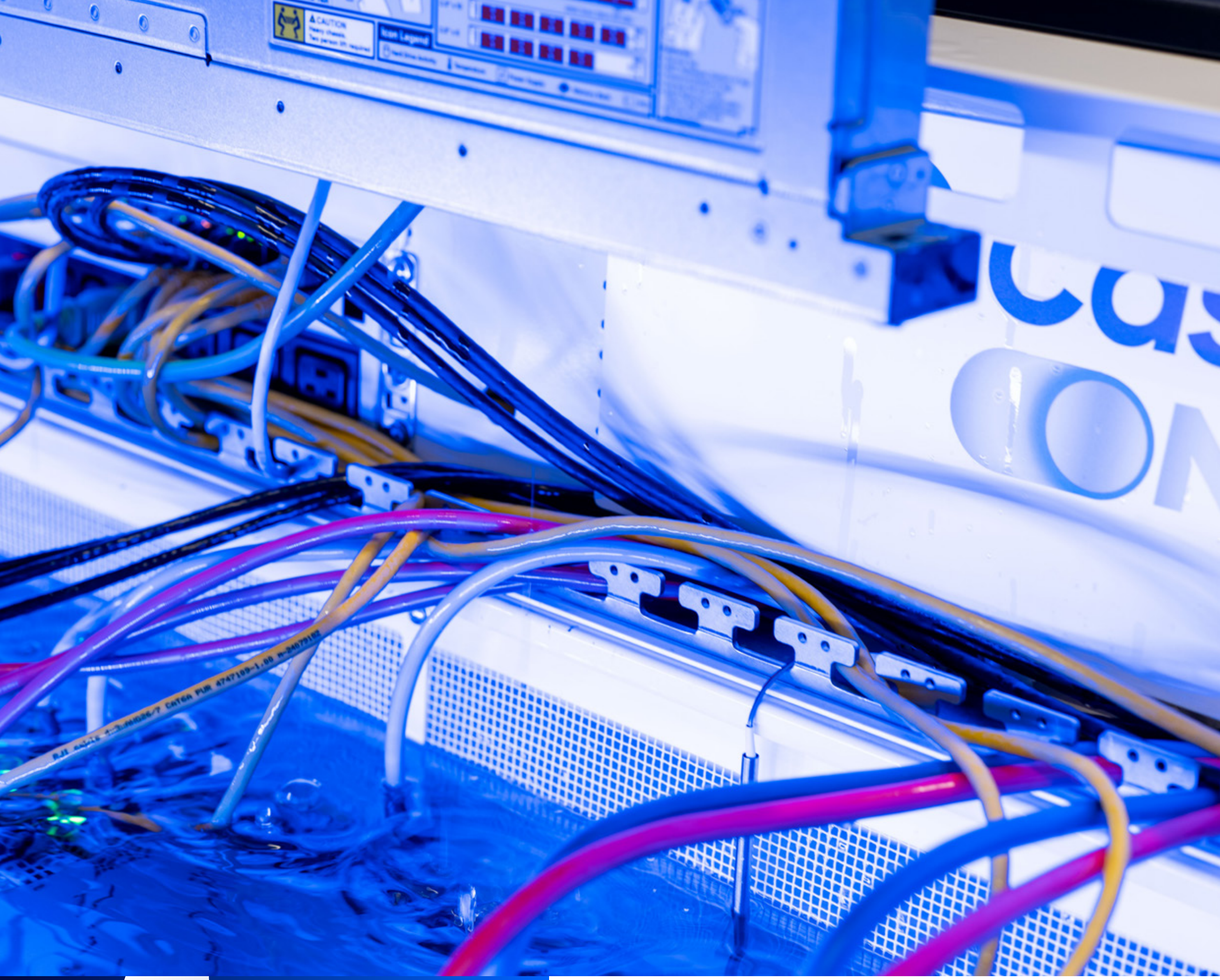
"By reducing heat rejection, it's almost what's termed as free cooling," Stephen explains. "Because you have the immersion environment, all the heat is being taken away by the dielectric fluids, and then you just need to cool down the dielectric fluids with a cooling loop.

"Additionally, because of the high temperatures of operating, you don't need to do any kind of refrigeration activity, you don't need to use any water to accelerate the cooling process. This means you dramatically decrease the amount of energy you use, both from a cooling side, but also now your servers don't have fans in them anymore. So even on the IT side, you're saving a lot of power."

Traditional cooling methods often require substantial amounts of water for evaporative cooling. By reducing water consumption, Castrol hopes to address a growing concern for data centre operators, particularly in regions where water scarcity is an issue.

"Liquid cooling, specifically immersion cooling, has a benefit of energy saving up to 30% and water consumption reduction of about 80%," Sung quantifies, based on the company's research. "So, in the long run, it adds a reduction of the total cost of ownership for data centre owners."

Beyond operational efficiency, Castrol is also considering the entire lifecycle of its cooling fluids. Chris explains: "At Castrol, we've got a circularity strategy where we can collect our fluids at the end of their lifecycle and reprocess them into fresh fluids, making that a more sustainable solution."



“It’s basically an extension of what we’ve always done, fluid interaction with an application”

STEPHEN ZHAO,
THERMAL MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR FOR EMEA, CASTROL

The company will continue to utilise its global partnerships to support the evolution of immersion cooling across the data centre industry.

“No part of the world that we have found has access to excess power and excess water,” Austin says. “You need one or the other. Immersion solutions really take care of both and can lead to up to 30% power savings per server.

“The solutions we’re designing with Castrol and the data centres we’re designing aren’t applicable just to today’s chips. We know the roadmap – we know everything is going to have higher TDPs and it’s designed to support that as well.” ○

How **STACK** Champions **People-First Culture** During Hypergrowth

STACK's EMEA CEO John Eland on growth, social impact and fostering an inclusive culture through the STACK Academy and people-first values

WRITTEN BY: MAYA DERRICK

PRODUCED BY: LEWIS VAUGHAN

John Eland,
CEO EMEA,
STACK
Infrastructure

As the data centre industry undergoes a series of rapid transformations, STACK EMEA has been evolving at equally lightning speed.

STACK EMEA is responsible for developing and operating data centres across Europe. Blue Owl Capital's acquisition of IPI Partners, STACK's investors, has only accelerated its growth and ambitions, kicking off what CEO John Eland says is a "very exciting period for us".

"We maintain our focus on our core and incumbent markets – Milan, Frankfurt, Oslo, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Zurich and Geneva – but we're also now actively accelerating towards new markets," John explains. And while the data centre industry is capital-intensive and highly competitive, STACK Infrastructure's true differentiator, he says, is its people-first approach.

"We're very much people first – when it comes to both clients and employees," he says. "We're very service driven.

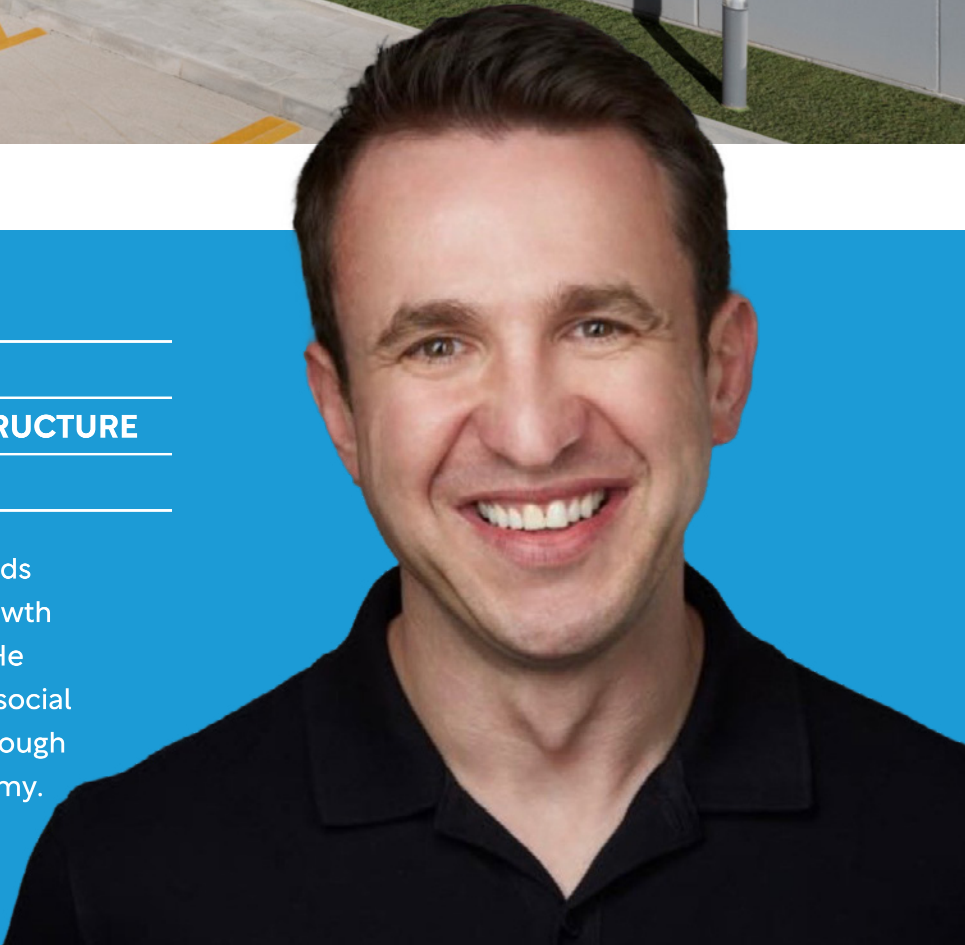
"That's what sets us apart, particularly within EMEA where there's been so many widespread challenges in the GC delivery market."

Despite not building in what John calls "traditional" markets, John and his team have faced – and adapted to overcome – a plethora of challenges thanks to STACK's flexible and fluid thinking, both when it comes to client requirements as well as its own internal, cultural perspective.

STACK's MIL02 data centre campus in Milan

> **"We're very much people first – both when it comes to clients and employees"**
>
> **JOHN ELAND,**
> CEO EMEA,
> STACK INFRASTRUCTURE

STACK
INFRASTRUCTURE



JOHN ELAND

TITLE: CEO EMEA

COMPANY: STACK INFRASTRUCTURE

INDUSTRY: DATA CENTRE

As CEO of EMEA, John Eland leads STACK Infrastructure's rapid growth and integration across Europe. He champions people-first values, social impact and inclusive culture through initiatives like the STACK Academy.

STACK's journey

STACK's steadfast focus on culture has been put to the test during a period of hypergrowth. Since 2022, STACK has more than doubled its EMEA workforce, integrating legacy businesses in the Nordics, Switzerland and Italy while building a team in the UK at its London headquarters.

John notes: "We've been in hypergrowth mode from a sales and investment perspective, which is great. We've also been in integration mode.

"There's a lot going on – and that brings challenges as well – but organisationally, we're still very much people first. My job is to make STACK as culturally enjoyable as possible. I want it to be a safe place. Equality and inclusion are huge things for me.

"Our biggest asset is our people. They are the daily interface of our business, which is why we've had a firm focus on bringing in high-calibre individuals to take the organisation forward."

Despite being a relatively new player in the data centre industry, STACK's workforce of industry veterans is made up of people from across the largest and most established data centre companies in the world, some of whom have been with STACK EMEA while it was still in its startup phase. Now, John is finding the best talent interested in working for STACK.

"This is a great sign that, culturally, we're doing something right," John adds. "We're doing something right and we've got real momentum."

STACK's strategic focus

At the start of 2024, STACK EMEA created a dedicated business unit for enterprise colocation.

"We took the strategic decision at the start of last year to separate into two divisions," John shares. "This gives a better service to the enterprise colo clients, allowing that unit to exclusively focus there, and likewise for our hyperscale clients."

The separation attracted interest from investors. In May 2025, STACK EMEA made the significant strategic decision to divest its European colocation business, with an agreement in place for Apollo-managed infrastructure funds to acquire it. This move, John explains, was driven by the desire to sharpen the company's focus on hyperscale data centre clients – the large cloud and internet companies that require vast, standardised facilities.

> "We're really trying to accelerate and push the outreach to people who don't have opportunities. I want everybody to have the opportunity... to come and work for us and come into the data centre industry"
>
> **JOHN ELAND,**
> CEO EMEA,
> STACK INFRASTRUCTURE

"It also allows us now, particularly with Blue Owl behind us, to hone in and focus on the hyperscale clients and requirements driving that real expansion-of-scale business.

"For me and my executive management team, it allows us to be exclusively focused on delivering for hyperscale rather than having one eye on the enterprise colo clients. It's a strategic decision that makes business sense and makes sense for all stakeholder groups. It's a good deal all around."

Social impact as a core value

For John, social impact is not a tick-box exercise but a core part of STACK's mission. He is passionate about giving back to the communities where the company operates, particularly as the data centre industry continues to grow at an unprecedented rate.

“This is nothing new but it’s really important to me that we give something back and engage,” John says. “Growth is exponential, so it’s so important that you build close links with communities and provide opportunities for people.”

At STACK, social impact initiatives have expanded significantly over the last two years, including its bee conservation projects in Italy and the Nordics and its partnership with STEM education programmes in Switzerland and the UK.

But the most ambitious programme to date is the STACK Academy. A skills-based learning programme designed to reach groups that are often overlooked by the technology sector, the STACK Academy was originally put forward as a traditional apprenticeship scheme and has since evolved into its current form in response to feedback from potential participants.

> **“The whole point of the academy is to target the harder to reach groups, the people who might not have the opportunities”**
>
> **JOHN ELAND,**
> CEO EMEA,
> STACK INFRASTRUCTURE

GEN02: One of three campuses located in Geneva

"We opened the age range up because we got a lot of inquiries from people who were in their 30s and 40s asking whether it was open to them or if they needed to be 18 to 21," John shares. "The whole point of the STACK Academy is to target the harder to reach groups, the people who might not have the opportunities.

"I'm really trying to push this into European and UK public policy and the schools' curriculum. If we can't get to people at school age, it's a futile battle – we're going to be constantly fighting this war of attrition.

"We need to educate the educators as well as reaching out to parents. We're really trying to accelerate and push the outreach to people who don't have opportunities. I want everybody to have the opportunity – whatever gender, social background, ethnic background you have – to come and work for us and come into the data centre industry."

In a bid to embed data centre education across Europe, STACK partners with the likes of go-tec! STEM lab in Schaffhausen, just outside Zurich

STACK

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STACK Infrastructure EMEA has more than **doubled** its workforce since 2022

Headcount is set to reach **500** in the next few months

More than **100** new roles are currently being filled

and EPFL University in Lausanne. It has also launched a pioneering scholarship scheme in the UK for girls studying STEM subjects.

"We need to make sure, in the harder to reach markets and societies that we're in, that we create our own STACK culture and we will drive that through," John adds.

And, with the STACK Academy specifically bringing in talent directly from the communities in which it operates – Milan, Geneva and Oslo, for this year – it feeds back into STACK's social impact drive to create value.

John continues: "There's a business driver behind that as well. We are building facilities that are going to be there for more than 30 years, so I want my employees to live within 10, 20 minutes of the data centres. Operating in these areas, we want to give back to these communities. It makes good business sense to have your employee talent pool on the doorstep."

Fostering an inclusive culture

John wants STACK to be a place where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute.

The company's rapid growth and integration of new teams have undoubtedly tested his workforce, but John believes the results speak for themselves.

The message is clear: STACK's reputation for inclusivity and opportunity is attracting top talent from across the industry. He sees this as a sign that the company is on the right track, both culturally and commercially.

For John, the future of STACK in EMEA is inseparable from its commitment to people, community and meaningful social impact.

As the company continues its rapid growth across Europe, John remains focused on fostering an inclusive culture and expanding initiatives, like the STACK Academy.

For John and STACK, success will always be defined by the positive legacy they leave behind and the lives they help transform.

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CHAMPIONIN CHOICE IN ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE

WRITTEN BY:
MAYA
DERRICK

PRODUCED BY:
LEWIS
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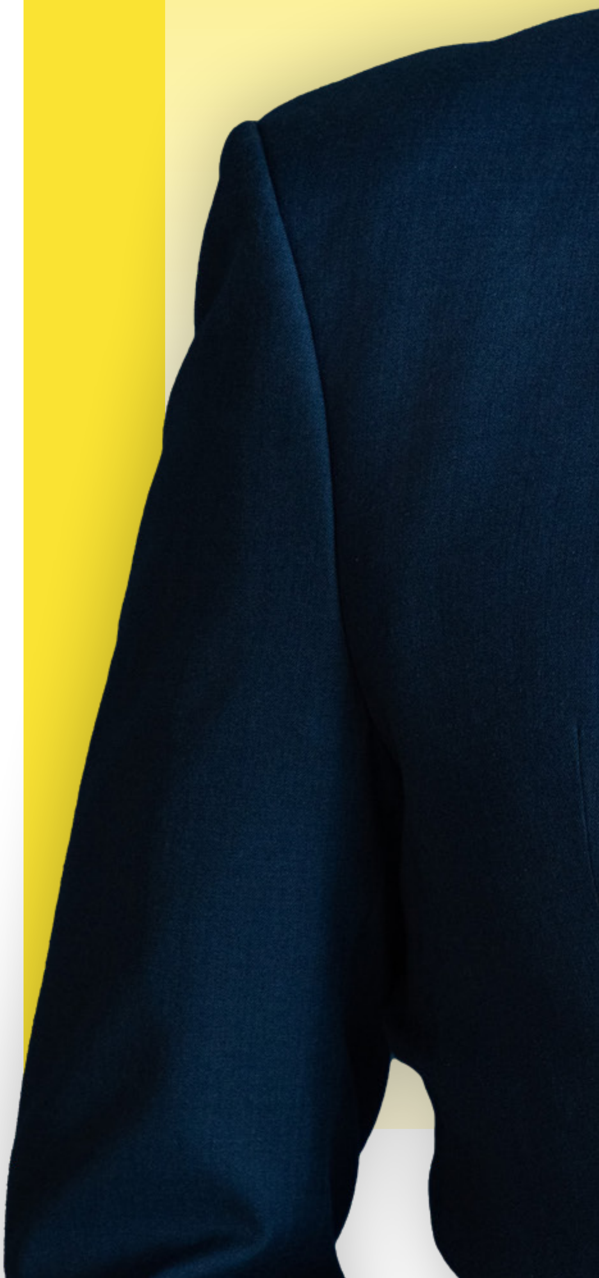

Kevin Purcell, Rimini Street's SVP Global Partners, Alliances & Channels, on how the enterprise software third-party support leader is championing optionality for IT roadmaps

Rimini Street is a global leader in third-party support for enterprise applications. In the 20 years since it was founded, Rimini Street has amassed a portfolio of more than 5,900 contracts worldwide, facilitating more than US$9bn in client savings.

It's often cited as the company that kicked off having third-party support for enterprise software applications, according to its Senior Vice President of Global Partners, Alliances and Channels, Kevin Purcell.

"Our primary support engineers have, on average, more than 20 years of experience," Kevin begins. "These are folks who come from enterprise software companies to join Rimini Street on our mission."

As a "global leader in end-to-end third-party enterprise software support management and innovation solutions" – as phrased by Kevin – Rimini Street has a broad remit, allowing it to act not just as a service provider, but as a strategic partner to some of the world's largest organisations.

This comes as enterprises are met with increasing pressure from software vendors – particularly giants like SAP and Oracle – to migrate to cloud-based,

KEVIN PURCELL

TITLE: **SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL PARTNERS, ALLIANCES & CHANNELS**

Kevin serves as SVP, Global Partners, Alliances and Channels at Rimini Street.

In this role, he is responsible for the overall strategic vision, innovative approach and all aspects of the Global Partner Program spanning across each of Rimini Street's Global Theaters.

His focus is connecting Rimini Street's comprehensive family of unified solutions with strategic partners to help run, manage, support, customise, configure, connect, protect, monitor and optimise enterprise applications, database and technology software. This enables Rimini Street's clients to achieve better business outcomes, significantly reduce costs and reallocate resources towards strategic projects.

subscription models. These transitions are often costly, disruptive and not always aligned with a customer's business priorities. Rimini Street offers a compelling alternative: long-term support for existing systems, enabling organisations to delay or avoid forced upgrades and cloud migrations.

"Customers have limited resource, limited budget and they need help," Kevin says, aware of the challenges facing customers. "In a competitive environment customers need partners like Rimini Street to really help them get there."

RIMINI STREET FOUNDED IN
2005

Rimini Street and optionality
Rimini Street's business model hinges on giving customers freedom, particularly by maintaining legacy systems while avoiding expensive and disruptive upgrades. For Kevin, Rimini Street's "optionality" model sets the business apart, making it a competitive differentiator in a vendor-locked industry.

But for Rimini Street, this philosophy is more than a marketing slogan

> **"IN A COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT CUSTOMERS NEED PARTNERS LIKE RIMINI STREET TO REALLY HELP THEM GET THERE"**
>
> **KEVIN PURCELL,**
> SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL PARTNERS, ALLIANCES & CHANNELS, RIMINI STREET

but a direct response to vendor lock-in – a situation where customers feel trapped by the upgrade and support cycles of major software providers.

"Our customers are looking for options. They don't want to be locked into a vendor, and that's what optionality means," Kevin explains. Rimini Street's approach empowers organisations to make IT decisions on their own terms, rather than being dictated to by vendors.

"Optionality in the industry is really important to me, because our customers are looking for options," Kevin says. "They don't want to be locked into a vendor. We are striking these partnerships so that we have more "feet on the street" to tell this compelling story and share the benefits of Rimini Street's Services."

With Rimini Street's customer base including users of SAP, Oracle and merlin cyber

Cutting Costs, Boosting Efficiency in the US Public Sector

Merlin Cyber and Rimini Street help government agencies unlock a smarter path to IT modernization using an innovative cost-neutral approach called Self-Funded Modernization

US government agencies face mounting pressure to modernize their IT infrastructure while operating under constrained budgets.

A partnership between Rimini Street and Merlin Cyber aims to address this challenge through what the firms describe as "Self-Funded Modernization" – using cost savings from alternative IT services and support to fund cybersecurity and modernization initiatives.

Julie Xiang, Chief Revenue Officer for Merlin Cyber, explains the partnership's foundation. "Rimini Street and Merlin Cyber have joined forces to help US government agencies to reduce costs and escape vendor lock-in while also unlocking a smarter path to IT modernization – one that doesn't require a bigger budget," she says.

The approach centers on reducing operational costs of maintaining IT systems, such as resource planning systems from vendors including VMware, SAP and Oracle, creating budget headroom for agencies to invest in cybersecurity measures and IT infrastructure improvements without requiring additional appropriations.

This financial model creates a reinvestment cycle where cost reductions from alternative IT services and support generate funds that agencies can redirect toward modernization projects. "Agencies must demonstrate meaningful and measurable efficiencies – and shifting IT support services to Rimini Street is a no-brainer," Julie states. "Think of it as a reinvestment loop: cost savings fund modernization, modernization improves security and agility, and agencies achieve even greater efficiencies and mission readiness."

Merlin Cyber is the hub for government efficiency and tech innovation

Merlin Cyber positions itself as the go-to-market and Zero Trust Modernization affiliate of Merlin Group, with Merlin Cyber's relationship with federal agencies spanning nearly three decades. "Merlin Cyber has been a trusted technology partner to the US Government for nearly 30 years," Julie notes. "We've earned that trust by working side-by-side with federal agencies, helping them embrace innovations purpose-built to advance their missions."

TOTAL UNITS
40.586.663
80%
61%
46%
32%
04 SATURDAY

The company operates the Merlin Lab, which serves as a testing environment where government agencies can evaluate how specific technologies would function within their unique infrastructure environments. Rather than pursuing volume-based partnerships, Merlin Cyber is very selective with whom they partner and represent. “This is one of the reasons why the US Government trusts Merlin Cyber. Rimini Street is a great example of a company with a solution that we fully support that will help agencies realize immediate cost-savings and achieve operational excellence,” Julie explains.

> ***“Merlin Cyber represents a focused number of proven partners that we have fully vetted and stand behind.”***
>
> **Julie Xiang**
> Chief Revenue Officer
> Merlin Cyber

Trump administration efficiency focus drives modernization urgency

The current political environment has intensified focus on operational efficiency across the US government.

“Agencies are under immense pressure to do more – faster, better and more securely — with less budget,” Julie states.

The Self-Funded Modernization approach provides a clear yet flexible pathway for agencies to drive modernization efforts without the need for new budget allocations.

“By transitioning IT system support to Rimini Street, agencies can achieve immediate savings,” Julie explains. “These recovered funds can then be reinvested into cutting-edge technology solutions that enhance both efficiency and security - all without requiring additional appropriations.”

The partnership cites specific examples of cost reduction achieved through their approach. One enterprise client transitioned from a single ERP vendor arrangement, generating savings exceeding US$3m annually.

“The enterprise not only saved meaningful budget on maintenance, upgrades/updates, customization support, and self-support, but because of the transition, they saw dramatically improved response times and improved operational performance,” Julie says.

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VMware, this message of empowerment is resonating. Many of these see the company as a trusted partner rather than just another supplier. The consultative approach Rimini Street takes is a key differentiator.

“We are taking the consultative approach,” Kevin shares. “We’re not saying we’re the good guys and they’re the bad guys. What we’re actually saying is, look, we are another option that provides a better service at a much lower cost.”

Rimini Street’s service proposition is underpinned by robust operational commitments. The company offers 24/7/365 support, with service-level agreements guaranteeing a 10-minute response time for critical issues. Engineers with decades of experience provide support for up to 15 years on software releases that vendors no longer maintain, even when those systems have been heavily customised.

For Kevin, trust is the foundation of Rimini Street’s client relationships. This helps ensure the building of trust with its enterprise clients, particularly at a time when customer needs are changing more than ever.

“These relationships, like any, are like a marriage,” Kevin says. “We build our trust

> **“WE BUILD OUR TRUST BY DOING WHAT OUR CUSTOMER IS EXPECTING AND DELIVERING ON OUR PROMISES”**
>
> **KEVIN PURCELL,**
> SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL PARTNERS, ALLIANCES & CHANNELS, RIMINI STREET

by doing what our customer is expecting and delivering on our promises. Our tagline for our overall strategy is ‘we’ll get you there’. You do what you say you’re going to do and you deliver and make sure that customers get what they need.”

Strategic alliances and the power of partnership

Rimini Street’s strategy is not just about resisting the status quo – it is about scaling a new vision for enterprise IT. Central to this ambition are strategic alliances.

Since joining Rimini Street, Kevin and his team have signed numerous partnerships, including high-profile deals with ServiceNow and Merlin Cyber. These alliances are designed to expand Rimini Street's reach and enhance its value proposition.

The partnership with Merlin Cyber, for example, targets the federal sector in the United States. Merlin Cyber brings deep expertise in public sector sales and technology innovation – particularly when it comes to the US Federal Government – while Rimini Street delivers cost-effective software support and modernisation. By working alongside Merlin Cyber, Rimini Street's goal is to help government agencies reduce IT costs and extend the life of existing software assets-freeing up budget for innovation and mission-critical projects.

"Merlin Cyber has a tremendous product services portfolio around cyber security which matches its robust knowledge base in the federal government," Kevin says.

"With us, they bring much of that federal experience to 'federalise' our services, which is what we want to do. This partnership is going to be a key partnership for that area of our business."

This intrinsic knowledge is both set to propel prospective partners and benefit Rimini Street's client base, making the collaboration one that will continue to evolve, grow and bring benefits.

But for Kevin, it's not just its partnership with Merlin Cyber that is exciting. As someone who sees partnerships as an integral part of Rimini Street's DNA, he sees Rimini Street's approach as something that enables the business to address the unique needs of different industries, from healthcare to the public sector.

"With partnerships, we bring companies into our ecosystem that bring a special value proposition to the table," Kevin explains. "They often do things that will enhance our offerings in the marketplace such as specific industry expertise.

"We'll continue to look for partners that help broaden our value proposition to our customer base. Looking ahead at where we want to go, I want to focus on partners that are willing to bring innovation into the dynamic.

"What's also very critical is that we want to make sure that the selection process of our partners – and how we build out those partnerships – is based on data. We're taking a close

RIMINI STREET HELPED CLIENTS SAVE MORE THAN

US$9bn

IN THE LAST 20 YEARS

Kevin Purcell,
Senior Vice President
of Global Partners,
Alliances & Channels,
Rimini Street

look at the partnerships that are actually driving success. We're also going to benchmark and create new best practices and replicate these across other partnerships.

"Partnerships are the core of what I and my team do. The team is completely focused on developing the right partnerships. What this means to me is that when I look at where the company wants to go, partnerships have to be able to deliver higher customer satisfaction among our clients. Many of these partners have been servicing these customers for many years. They're trusted by the companies that they serve, and Rimini Street is another key component of how they'll help support their customer base."

> **"WITH PARTNERSHIPS, WE BRING COMPANIES INTO OUR ECOSYSTEM THAT BRING A SPECIAL VALUE PROPOSITION TO THE TABLE"**
>
> **KEVIN PURCELL,**
> SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL PARTNERS, ALLIANCES & CHANNELS, RIMINI STREET

Rimini Street: Looking ahead

As well as this, Kevin is looking to further bring AI systems into Rimini Street's operations going forward. Here, he sees tremendous opportunity and hopes it will support him leading the charge on partnerships for Rimini Street.

"Technology is evolving rapidly and AI is disrupting everything," he says.

This is a large part of how he sees the next 12 to 18 months for him and Rimini Street, with a focus on innovation – particularly in areas like AI and workflow automation – central to integrating these capabilities into existing software environments. As a result, Rimini Street clients will be able to modernise without the disruption and the significant expense of upgrades and migrations.

"My team and I are always focusing on the future," Kevin says. "From a company perspective, we have high aspirations."

These ambitions include growing its revenue structure into the billions and expanding into new industries. As to be expected, partnerships are a core pillar of this strategy – with data driving how AI and systems can help Rimini Street continue to drive more successful partnerships.

"We also want to make sure that, ultimately, the future is very bright for our customers – the more and more customers that stop doing upgrades for the sake of it, we'll see more and more companies taking a closer look at the innovation that we provide.

"There's a bright future ahead for not only Rimini Street but also for our customers." ○

BEST BUY'S PROCUREMENT REVOLUTION: FROM REACTIVE TO STRATEGIC

WRITTEN BY:
AARON MCMILLAN

PRODUCED BY:
JAMES WHITE

Anna Barej, Vice President of Procurement at Best Buy, details a four-year transformation journey that has redefined the role of procurement

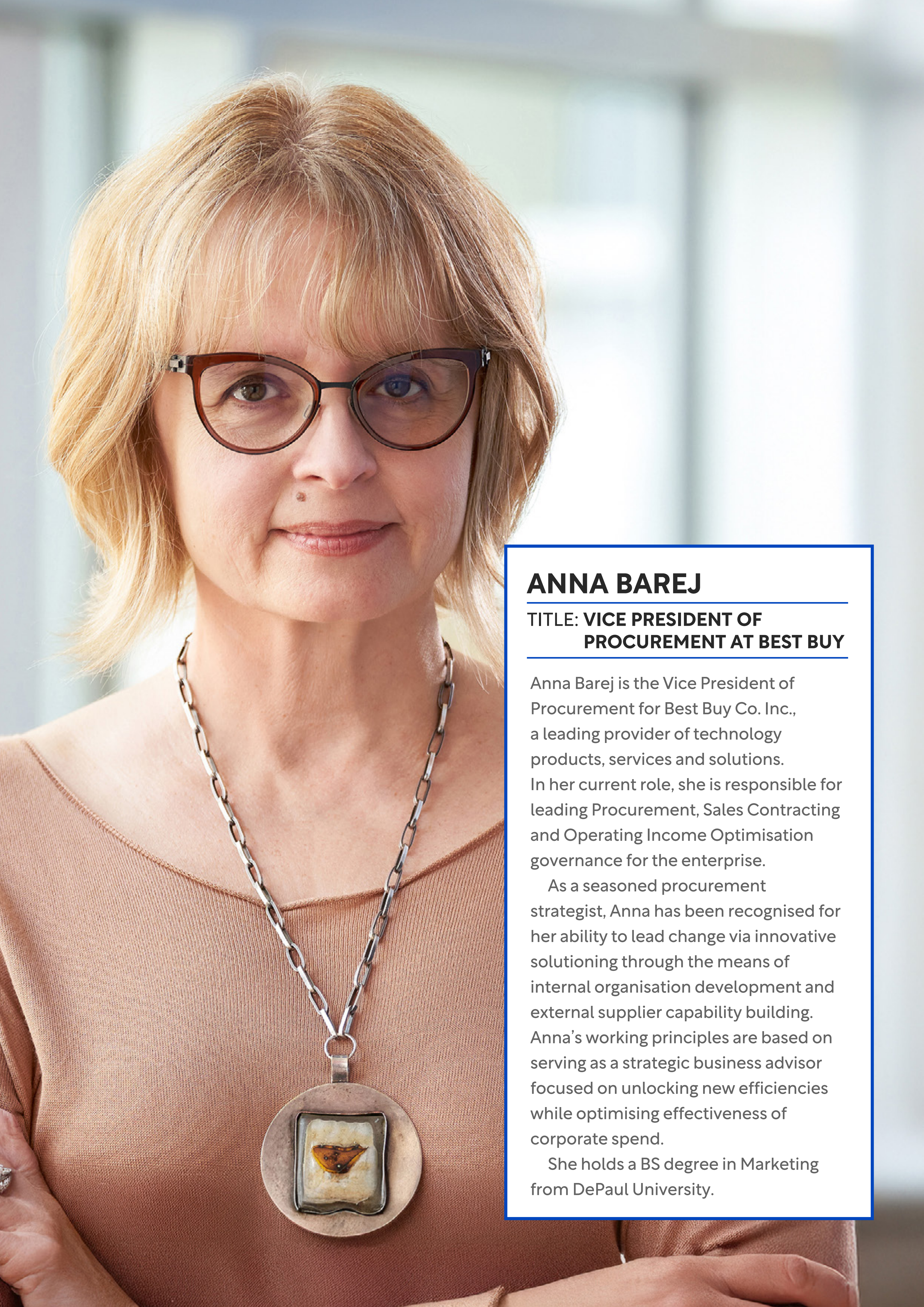
Best Buy stands as a major player in the consumer electronics retail space, generating over US$40bn in annual revenue. While its core activity and brand recognition are strongest across North America, the company also maintains operations in India and China.

Beyond its traditional retail footprint, Best Buy is actively expanding its business model.

"We are an organisation that's focused on expanding its footprint beyond traditional retail," explains Anna Barej, Vice President of Procurement at Best Buy.

"Best Buy is heavily focused on growing our retail media presence like many other retailers in the industry. We're also focusing on elevating our omnichannel experience and introducing marketplace as a virtual shopping mall for our customers"

These strategic growth initiatives require significant procurement support, positioning the function as a critical enabler of the company's future success. The procurement team at Best Buy is now at the heart of driving the company forward following a successful transformation mission spearheaded by Anna.



ANNA BAREJ

TITLE: **VICE PRESIDENT OF PROCUREMENT AT BEST BUY**

Anna Barej is the Vice President of Procurement for Best Buy Co. Inc., a leading provider of technology products, services and solutions. In her current role, she is responsible for leading Procurement, Sales Contracting and Operating Income Optimisation governance for the enterprise.

As a seasoned procurement strategist, Anna has been recognised for her ability to lead change via innovative solutioning through the means of internal organisation development and external supplier capability building. Anna's working principles are based on serving as a strategic business advisor focused on unlocking new efficiencies while optimising effectiveness of corporate spend.

She holds a BS degree in Marketing from DePaul University.

From reactive to strategic: the procurement transformation journey

When Anna joined Best Buy in 2021, she inherited a procurement function that was fundamentally transactional in nature. While the team was competent in executing core sourcing and contracting activities, it lacked the strategic vision and capabilities needed to drive competitive advantage.

"I was recruited to transform the organisation," she explains. "The organisation at that point in time was more of a reactive, transactional team who did really good work servicing the business. What was missing was innovation and insights that enabled our businesses to actually have a competitive advantage."

Anna's mandate was clear: transform procurement from a reactive function into a strategic partner through improvements in people, processes and technology. This comprehensive transformation would require significant changes to how the function operated, from redefining its core value proposition to revolutionising its technological infrastructure.

Redefining procurement value

The first and perhaps most critical step in Best Buy's procurement transformation, labelled 'Propel', was redefining what value meant for the function.

While cost optimisation remained a core objective with specific targets, the transformation expanded procurement's value proposition significantly.

"The traditional definition of procurement value is cost transformation and cost optimisation," Anna shares.

"That, for us, is still one of our goals and we are measured against it, but we're not doing that at the cost of trade-offs."

"We want to make sure we provide spent optimisation for quality and for benefit to the business, but that's only a very small sliver of what we do."

Best Buy's procurement team now delivers value through strategic insights, innovation, technology enablement and building genuine strategic partnerships, rather than managing transactional engagements. This comprehensive value proposition has become the foundation of the function's new identity.

“We are an organisation that’s focused on expanding its footprint beyond retail”

ANNA BAREJ,
VICE PRESIDENT OF PROCUREMENT, BEST BUY

“Value was definitely the first thing we needed to redefine,” Anna emphasises.

Managing change

While technology and processes were critical components of the transformation, Anna found people and change management to be the most challenging aspects of the journey.

The scale of change required was significant and not everyone was prepared to embrace the new direction.

“Change is the hardest part of transformation,” Anna reflects. “I’ve answered this question quite frequently:

SpendHQ

Enabling World-Class Procurement Transformation

SpendHQ's Spend Intelligence and Performance Management tools play a critical role in supporting procurement excellence at companies like Best Buy

One word dominates modern procurement: complexity. The scope of work for those in the profession has expanded well beyond sourcing and control, encompassing strategic responsibilities for areas as broad as innovation and transformation, compliance and regulation, and risk and sustainability.

To deliver measurable impact in this environment, CPOs and their teams need unmatched visibility and accountability, actionable insights powered by well-managed data, and simplified reporting that drives effective strategic decision making.

It's here that SpendHQ, the leading best-in-class provider of innovative enterprise procurement intelligence solutions, excels. The company helps advance procurement teams by offering a centralised system for the classification of all spend data, as well as managing the entire sourcing project pipeline and results.

Enabling strategic procurement

"We have a unique proposition, comprising two SaaS solutions, that provides a full procurement platform to enable successful transformation," says Shannon Wegner, Strategic Account Manager at SpendHQ.

"Our Spend Intelligence solution provides spend analytics," she adds. "It gives critical visibility into organisational spend across all raw spend data – we manage all the normalisation, classification and data management within the solution to drive smarter strategies and elevate procurement's performance with the organisation."

To do this effectively, Spend Intelligence leverages AI to organise data and deliver automated and actionable insights and reporting.

SpendHQ's Performance Management solution is a strategic procurement project management tool that helps teams put data and insights into action. "It identifies opportunities, then tracks and manages projects and savings, and acts as an intelligent procurement control centre," Shannon notes.

Combined, SpendHQ's solutions provide a unique and powerful end-to-end intelligence and performance platform for procurement teams. The company's management of data is a critical aspect, particularly with procurement teams facing multiple workstreams and stakeholders, as well as large volumes of enterprise data.

"We really have one of the few solutions out there that covers everything," says Shannon. "With our platform, procurement gets accountability, visibility and consistency of data that simplifies workflows, drives savings, reduces risks, manages compliance and identifies new opportunities."

Supporting transformation at Best Buy

SpendHQ's solutions have played a crucial role in enabling transformation at leading consumer electronics retailer Best Buy.

Close collaboration with customers is paramount to how SpendHQ operates. The team works closely with Best Buy as it navigates a complex procurement transformation focused on embracing digital solutions and enabling procurement to drive internal change.

Best Buy uses the Performance Management solution as a central platform for managing projects and initiatives from intake through planning and reporting.

> *"SpendHQ sits at the centre of everything we do and allows us to manage all our work in one place. It's a great way for category managers and their leaders to track progress, provide forecasts, prioritise work and manage workload."*
>
> **Anna Barej**
> Vice President of Procurement
> **Best Buy**

"They're a high performing, transformation-focused team," says Shannon. "Our tool provides visibility across the organisation, improves collaboration and communication, enhances how they work and transforms category and contract management. Data and visibility provides the roadmap and intelligence to drive excellence and achieve organisational goals."

SpendHQ continues to innovate to meet the ever-changing priorities facing procurement teams. For the Best Buy partnership, this involves ensuring the company has access to the most cutting-edge features and functionality through collaborative beta testing, while also deepening existing collaboration.

More broadly, SpendHQ drives innovation across its product portfolio to address the evolving procurement landscape. "This means looking at how we use AI across our portfolio, how we classify data more effectively, how we can deliver better and faster for our clients, and how we support world-class procurement functions to achieve success," says Shannon.

Learn More

> **“What we delivered to the enterprise doubled during the initial couple of years”**
>
> ANNA BAREJ,
> VICE PRESIDENT OF PROCUREMENT,
> BEST BUY

‘what was your biggest challenge?’. The answer was people’s reaction to and embrace of change.”

The transformation initially triggered some major shifts, with some team members who weren’t aligned with the new vision opting to depart Best Buy.

While challenging, Anna views this as ultimately beneficial for both the individuals and the function.

She continues: “We had significant turnover during the first two years of the transformation, primarily because many individuals didn’t necessarily believe in the future or they weren’t comfortable with the approach, so they self-selected themselves out of the organisation.

“Ultimately, I think that was a good thing – for them and for us.”

Successful change management required a dramatically different leadership approach, focused on keeping team members informed and involved in decision-making, as well as providing them with genuine ownership of the transformation journey.

Anna adds: “The approach to change management required a very different way of working on my part and on my leadership team’s part. We focused on ensuring our team played a role in the transformation, leading change versus being expected to only react to it.”

Technology as a transformation enabler

Best Buy’s procurement transformation has been heavily enabled by technology, with solutions from multiple partners, including SpendHQ, playing crucial roles.

A particularly challenging aspect was consolidating data from dozens of disparate legacy systems into a unified view.

Microsoft
Copilot+PC

Anna was faced with taking 38 systems which had existed in the legacy environment and folding most of that data into one view – something she described as being "a tremendous benefit for the whole company."

"SpendHQ has been a great partner for us," she notes. "They are providing us with procurement and performance management capability, a tool we use to manage all our initiatives, from intake to forecasting and planning and reporting."

"SpendHQ sits at the center of everything we do and allows us to manage all our work in one place. It's a great way for category managers and their leaders to track progress, provide forecasts, prioritise work and manage workload."

The technology transformation has delivered significant benefits, particularly in terms of data visibility and decision-making capabilities. This has elevated procurement's standing within the organisation and enabled more strategic conversations with business leaders.

"The primary benefit that I see is the ability to provide full visibility into data," Anna explains.

"Digitising all of our spend and all of our procurement activities is helping us to not just make better decisions and plan more effectively but is truly helping the enterprise understand how they behave."

WATCH NOW

Best Buy's procurement revolution: from reactive to strategic business partner driving growth

Measurable results and strategic impact

Best Buy's procurement transformation has delivered impressive quantifiable results, with Anna helping to double procurement's financial contributions within the first year of the Propel programme.

"What we delivered to the enterprise doubled during the initial couple of years and we're keeping that momentum going," says Anna. "It's been sustained by the transformation."

However, the strategic impact extends far beyond financial metrics. The transformation has fundamentally changed how the procurement function is perceived within the organisation, creating deeper partnerships with business stakeholders and enabling procurement to influence strategic decisions.

The cultural shift has opened new opportunities for procurement to contribute.

"Stakeholders begin to reach out differently," Anna explains. "They begin to ask different questions, which allows us, in turn, to insert ourselves into the most critical moments of opportunity.

"The partnership elevated us to a different level, unlocking opportunities and literally unlocking rooms for us. We began being invited into business strategy sessions and long-term planning sessions – now that is a significant pivot from the reactive role that we once played."

Expanding beyond traditional procurement boundaries

Perhaps the most significant indicator of procurement's elevated status is that it has been asked to expand beyond its traditional remit.

The function now plays a central role in driving optimisation.

"Our recent success in delivering incremental value and providing new levels of data visibility to the enterprise has resulted in expansion of our role to include facilitation of operating income optimisation efforts for the company," Anna reveals.

"Procurement has been asked to integrate commercial and business operational efficiency strategies into one enterprise governance process. This approach enables visibility to all opportunities for allocation decisions in growth priorities.

"Being a lever of insights and information in a very proactive structured way is driving different levels of discussions and enabling us to be at the forefront of growth through reinvestment strategies," celebrates Anna.

"I'm very proud that procurement is not only contributing to the bottom line, but ultimately top-line growth as well."

> **"I'm very proud that procurement is not only contributing to the bottom line, but ultimately top-line growth"**
>
> **ANNA BAREJ,**
> VICE PRESIDENT OF PROCUREMENT,
> BEST BUY

Key victories and lessons learned

Reflecting on the transformation journey, Anna identifies three significant achievements:

1. Redefining procurement's value proposition and becoming a genuine strategic partner to the business.
2. Building an entrepreneurial culture within procurement that encourages innovation and constructive challenge.
3. Expanding beyond traditional procurement boundaries to directly contribute to Best Buy's growth strategies.

However, given the chance to do it all again, Anna admits she would have paid more attention to change management: "I would definitely pay more attention upfront to the change aspect and how people react to it.

"I assumed that, if I were to communicate effectively multiple times, it would be enough. But what I've learned over time is that you have to dedicate much more time to the change conversation.

"You need to have different types of conversations with a variety of audiences. Some people require

BEST
BUY

Let's talk ab
what's possible™

more attention than others. The differences in approach to change really have to be top of mind. I have not seen a standard playbook that works for all. Considering current state organisational culture, level of functional maturity and differences in how individuals process information are critical and require time to execute effectively."

The evolution continues

While the Propel transformation programme is nearing completion, Anna is clear in her belief that the evolution must continue: "The Propel transformation may soon be complete, but the spirit of transformation will not go away. It will change to an ongoing capability evolution. Propel helped us create a culture comfortable with change and challenges".

Her team is now focused on new opportunities, including leveraging AI, expanding their supplier relationship management capabilities and continuing to build on their operating income optimisation role.

Make it
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talk about
what's
possible.

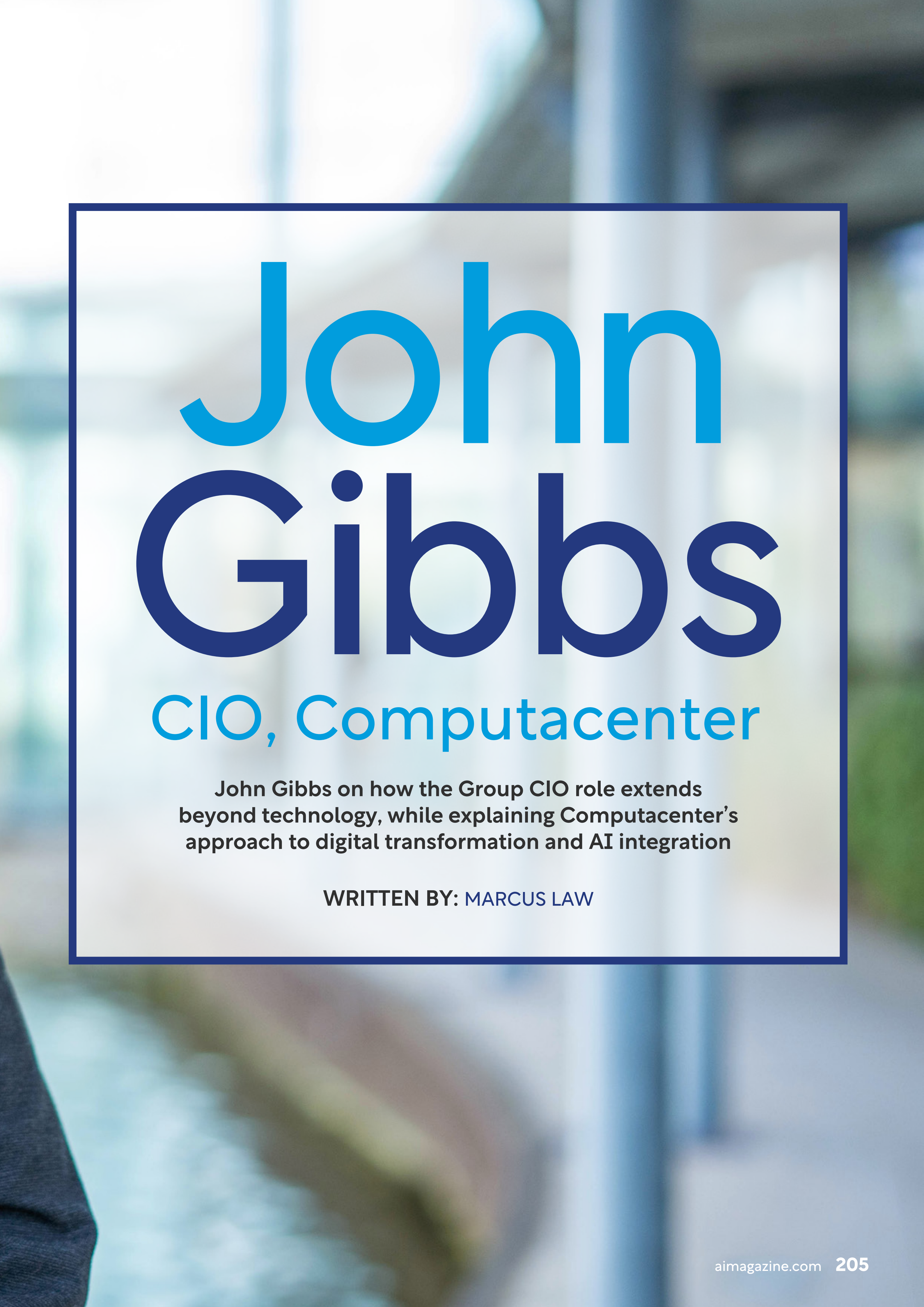
"The idea is that we should never lose the transformational mindset. We must always be challenging ourselves to do things differently, more efficiently for better outcomes, focusing on creating competitive advantage for the company," Anna concludes.

Despite challenges encountered along the way, Best Buy's procurement transformation stands as a compelling example of how procurement can evolve from a transactional function into a strategic business enabler.

By redefining value, investing in people, leveraging technology and building genuine partnerships, procurement has transformed its role and contribution to the enterprise.

The results speak for themselves: doubled financial contribution, elevated strategic partnerships and an expanded mandate to drive value across the organisation. As Anna and her team look to the future, they remain committed to continuous evolution, ensuring that procurement remains at the forefront of Best Buy's strategic agenda. ○

John Gibbs,
Group CIO,
Computacenter



John Gibbs

CIO, Computacenter

John Gibbs on how the Group CIO role extends beyond technology, while explaining Computacenter's approach to digital transformation and AI integration

WRITTEN BY: MARCUS LAW

The technology leadership landscape has undergone a seismic shift in recent years. Once viewed primarily as technical stewards of infrastructure and systems, CIOs now find themselves at the forefront of business strategy and organisational transformation. This evolution reflects a fundamental change in how companies perceive technology – no longer as merely a support function, but as the driving force behind competitive advantage, customer experience, and operational excellence.

In the IT services sector, this transformation holds particular significance. Companies like Computacenter operate at the intersection of technological innovation and business value, navigating complex client demands while managing their own digital evolution. The sector faces unprecedented challenges: cloud migration, cybersecurity threats, talent shortages and the AI revolution have all converged to create both opportunities and pressures for technology leaders.

It is within this context that John Gibbs operates as Group CIO at Computacenter, bringing a wealth of experience from his previous roles at International Airlines Group and Rolls-Royce. With 35 years in the IT industry, beginning as a developer and architect before leading major transformation programmes, John embodies the modern CIO archetype – technically proficient yet business-focused, strategic yet practical.

"I've got responsibility for all aspects of IT and technology inside Computacenter," he explains, describing a remit that encompasses everything from hardware infrastructure to applications. "Unlike a lot of CIOs, I also have responsibility for business transformation, and some operational aspects like business continuity and disaster recovery."

Computacenter's three-legged business model drives technology value

Computacenter operates what John describes as a "three-legged stool" approach to delivering technology services. This model addresses the full spectrum of client needs, from technology sourcing to managed services and professional services including strategic advice.

The first leg comprises value-added reselling of hardware and software technology products. "We can procure, build, configure, deliver, support through life and, ultimately, recover and recycle infrastructure from PCs for users through to high-end AI infrastructure for the Hyperscalers." John notes.

The second leg extends into professional services, drawing on the expertise of over 2,000 consultants who advise, design, architect and implement solutions.

The third leg completes the model with managed services – a comprehensive offering that spans workplace, networks, servers and storage, and cloud services. This capability enables Computacenter to innovate and collaborate with their clients to deliver real value.

JOHN GIBBS

TITLE: **GROUP CIO**

COMPANY: **COMPUTACENTER**

INDUSTRY: **TECHNOLOGY**

Responsible for all of Computacenter's systems and infrastructure, John joined Computacenter in July 2023. He has over 30 years' experience in Information Technology, most recently as the Group CIO of Rolls-Royce and International Airline Group.

19

Consecutive years of growth that Computacenter has achieved

Evolving CIO role requires business transformation at Computacenter

The transformation of the CIO role that John embodies is reflected in how he approaches technology leadership. Today's technology leaders, he explains, must drive business outcomes and value through digital initiatives.

"There's no part of the business that now isn't digitalised in some shape or form," John observes, "and people are looking to improve the outcomes from the investment in that technology." This might involve enhancing customer experiences, increasing employee productivity or optimising operations.

What makes the CIO position valuable is the holistic perspective it provides. Unlike other executive roles that view the organisation through specialised lenses, the CIO role offers a comprehensive view. "The CIO is uniquely positioned to see what's really going on inside a company," John explains, "looking top to bottom and side to side, and actually probably has a better insight into how the business works."

This perspective has informed Computacenter's transformation initiative; rather than pursuing technology upgrades for their own sake, John and his team have taken a business-focused approach, identifying structural barriers to growth.

"We started off by asking, what are the things that really block or hinder the company going forward? These are things that actually have allowed us to grow for 19 years in a row, but actually, maybe now, a hindrance to us growing for the next 19 years."

A central component involves the migration from SAP's ECC 6.0 platform to the more advanced S/4HANA

Computacenter
Computacenter
Urlaubsguru

environment, providing an opportunity to reimagine business processes.

"The move to S/4HANA is a key component of that because we've been on ECC 6.0 now since 2011. We've got a huge amount of benefit out of that platform, but as everybody knows, SAP is moving away from ECC6 to S/4HANA, and the time is now right for us to move to do that journey," John explains.

The S/4HANA implementation is being approached strategically, with careful consideration of which capabilities to standardise and which to customise. "S/4HANA presents a completely different set of opportunities than what we had with ECC6. So, we've been looking at how we maximise the exploitation of out-of-the-box capabilities to address the fundamentals, and then applying configuration focus where we see the potential to drive unique competitive advantage."

Cybersecurity presents constant balancing act for Computacenter operations

The threat landscape continues to evolve rapidly, shaped by geopolitical tensions and economic motivations. Computacenter faces these challenges both as an organisation protecting

> **“It’s a balance between risk and the need to protect the business, and then the balance is actually allowing the business to operate”**
>
> **JOHN GIBBS,**
> GROUP CIO,
> COMPUTACENTER

its own assets and as a service provider helping clients.

“We live in uncertain times,” John acknowledges. “Cybersecurity threats often reflect the political situation at a point in time. The risks to organisations range from state-sponsored cyber-attacks all the way down to individuals trying to infiltrate a business for the intellectual challenge - and everything in between.”

This reality drives Computacenter’s defensive strategy, which incorporates multiple layers of protection. The challenge lies in implementing robust protections without stifling business operations. “It’s a balance between risk and the need to protect the business, and then the balance is actually allowing the business to operate,” he explains, highlighting the tension between security and usability that all technology leaders must navigate. “So, we aim to defend against each one of the threats

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The technology
company that delivers

in different ways with different tools. On the flip side, you've got to allow the organisation to breathe and to be able to operate and to deliver effectively your customer commitments."

Computacenter's AI strategy focuses on four business areas

AI represents both an opportunity and a challenge for Computacenter. The company has developed a strategy that addresses AI from multiple perspectives: as a product to sell, a capability to enhance services, a consultative offering and a tool for internal optimisation.

The first element leverages Computacenter's partnerships with leading AI technology providers to deliver advanced AI solutions to our customers such as the Hyperscalers. The second component incorporates AI capabilities into managed services, enhancing customer experience through intelligent automation.

The third aspect involves professional services, with Computacenter positioning itself as a trusted advisor for AI implementation. The fourth dimension focuses inward, applying AI technologies to enhance Computacenter's own business processes.

50%

Percentage of hackathon AI projects that progressed to production deployment

"We're using AI in terms of understanding customers' requirements, mapping our portfolio to them, and generating the draft of a bid," John notes. "We're using it in terms of how we use inventory management in our warehouses. We're using it in terms of finance and understanding our cost base."

To accelerate innovation, Computacenter conducts global AI hackathons. A recent competition yielded 10 projects, half of which have progressed to production deployment, demonstrating commitment to practical implementation.

John emphasises that this advancement must occur responsibly. Computacenter has established an AI strategy board with representation from human resources, strategy and development, and legal departments to ensure initiatives align with organisational values and regulatory requirements.

"One of the big challenges of adopting AI is the ethical or responsible AI element," John observes. "We're working with our union representatives and workers councils to make sure they're comfortable with our AI strategy, because everything we want to do, we want to do it in the right way for our shareholders, the employees, and of course, our customers."

Future CIO role requires diverse skills beyond technology management

John envisions further evolution of the CIO role, potentially expanding into broader operational and strategic leadership positions. As AI and automation increasingly handle operational tasks, technology leadership will focus more on orchestrating technological capabilities than managing human resources.

"As you move forward, and you start to see AI agents actually doing the work on a much bigger scale than currently, delivering the operational performance of the business becomes much more about controlling the technology and using the technology agents than it is just about how you get the best out of people," he predicts.

John foresees a future where technology leaders could advance to the highest executive positions, even in non-technology companies. "I think you'll eventually see, perhaps in another five years' time, the upcoming CIOs now actually starting to become the CEOs of the future, not the CEOs of technology companies, but the CEOs of the consumer companies."

This evolution demands an increasingly diverse skill set. The modern CIO must function as a visionary, architect, planner, change agent, orchestrator, security guardian, communicator, coach, ethical leader, financial manager and global citizen – all simultaneously.

"I always describe the role of the CIO as the rounded individual who really understands the technology, really understands the commercials of the business and the market levers, but also has really strong people leadership skills," John reflects. "You need to bring all of that to the table. If you're strong in one aspect and not the others, then you won't make a very effective CIO." ○

perfectserve

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WRITTEN BY:
STELLA
NOLAN

PRODUCED BY:
LEWIS
VAUGHAN

CTO Bob Hackney shares how PerfectServe evolved from manual messaging to an AI-driven cloud platform, delivering the right message to caregivers on time

Established in 1997, PerfectServe initially addressed a medical practice's inefficient patient message handling. It transformed outdated workflows, introducing advanced interactive voice messaging technology to create a faster, more accurate, clinician-friendly solution.

Today, PerfectServe offers a fully-integrated, cloud-based platform that combines clinical communication, staff scheduling, a virtual operator console, automated answering services and patient engagement tools.

Chief Technology Officer Bob Hackney directs Perfectserve's efforts in the highly-regulated healthcare sector. His mandate is to improve care coordination, reduce administrative burdens and support clinician wellbeing. Bob applies his Marine Corps discipline and telecom leadership, focusing on a mission to make caregivers' lives easier, faster and safer through AI-powered healthcare.

Mission: Right message, right caregiver, right time

Bob clearly defines PerfectServe's objective: "Our core mission is to send the right message, to the right caregiver, at the right time. If you were to summarise it most simply, that's what we are about."

BOB HACKNEY

TITLE: CTO

Bob Hackney is the Chief Technology Officer at PerfectServe, bringing more than 20 years of experience in IT operations and systems engineering across the healthcare, fintech and telecom industries.

He has led global teams through transformative technology initiatives, with deep expertise in cloud migrations, infrastructure engineering and cybersecurity. Bob's leadership blends visionary thinking with a collaborative spirit, aligning closely with PerfectServe's mission to enhance communication and improve patient outcomes.

A former U.S. Marine, he believes in empowering others to reach their full potential. Outside of work, Bob enjoys spending quality time with his wife, children, and grandchildren.

Bob Hackney,
Chief Technology Officer,
PerfectServe

The mission serves as the guiding principle that drives every service and innovation.

PerfectServe's clinical platform streamlines communication and scheduling, ensuring critical information reaches the right people, correctly, at precisely the right moment.

"There are lots of ways to communicate," Bob explains. "You can make a phone call, you can use a pager, you can get a push message on your phone – and we bring together all those methods of communication. We couple it with delivering it to the person in the right way, whether they want a page, a push message to their phone or a voicemail."

Evolution through innovation: the AI revolution

Since beginning his tenure at PerfectServe in 2023, Bob has seen a significant evolution, particularly in AI.

"In the last 18 to 24 months, I have had the privilege of partnering with all the AI initiatives entering the market," he says. "Large language models can take what used to take hours, days or weeks in the caregiving setting and shorten that cycle significantly."

A clear example comes from analysing nurse call response times. Initially, data suggested nurses were slow to respond to patient requests, such as pressing a button for water. However, AI-powered analysis revealed a more nuanced picture: nurses promptly saw and addressed patients' needs; yet, because the calls weren't urgent, they often didn't mark them as completed within the system. Consequently, the system inaccurately reported delayed responses.

> **"Our core mission is to send the right message to the right caregiver at the right time"**
>
> **BOB HACKNEY,**
> CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER,
> PERFECTSERVE

Bob notes: "Knowing the why behind the data much quicker and leveraging conversational AI to get to that reason allowed them to make better decisions around how they allocate their resources to solve that problem."

The ability to rapidly surface actionable insights from complex data sets is emblematic of AI's broader impact across PerfectServe's operations.

From cloud infrastructure to healthcare innovation

Bob's journey from cloud infrastructure to healthcare technology has uniquely positioned him to address the sector's challenges.

"The benefit of moving to the cloud is you get much faster cycle times and you can allocate your resources to the highest-value work," he explains.

By partnering with leading cloud service providers such as Amazon

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Are you done with this patients labwork?
EHR
Critical Lab Result
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Labs drawn they'll be back soon
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Were labs drawn for this patient?
Ellie Bishop
FW: Consult Urgent
Cardiology Consult
Wayne Fiscus
General
Contact pt nurse re. overnight issue
Received 3 days ago
Received 12 mins ago
Received 13 mins ago
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Received 22 mins ago
Replied 3 days ago
Read 4 days ago
Messages
Directory
Dialer
Patients
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30-40%

proportion of PerfectServe's capacity focused on keeping systems running efficiently

Web Services (AWS) and Google, PerfectServe can focus its resources on what truly matters: engaging with customers and improving care through technology.

Security is a high priority in healthcare, an industry under constant threat from ransomware and other cyberattacks.

Bob continues: "Partnering with AWS, Google and other SaaS providers allowed us to make sure we have the highest level of security and depth, as well as the highest level of security protections, so that we could ensure we were always able to provide our healthcare settings and our products with very high availability."

LUCIDPOINT

Transforming Healthcare With Cloud Innovation

LucidPoint's Mike Fontaine on delivering successful cloud stories, and how innovation and collaboration solves real business problems

In a world where technology with purpose is increasingly common, few missions are more important or rewarding than solving real human problems and driving better healthcare outcomes with innovation. LucidPoint, a leading cloud consultancy and managed services provider that specialises in AWS and Google Cloud, is central to this objective.

The company works with leaders in the healthcare industry and other sectors to support cloud adoption and modernisation, provide managed services and enable continuous innovation that delivers tangible business value.

"We help customers realise the full potential of the cloud," says President and CEO Mike Fontaine. "We are a next generation cloud consultancy and MSP that delivers flexible solutions, optimised performance and dedicated support to customers. We work as a true and trusted partner, collaborating shoulder to shoulder and focusing on solving complex problems with innovative technology."

Enabling healthcare transformation

LucidPoint has gained a reputation for success in the healthcare sector, an area that Mike believes benefits significantly from cloud adoption and migration. "It's a rewarding sector to work in – you're solving a unique set of human challenges with a very definite purpose. Healthcare stands to profoundly benefit from the latest technology innovations.

"The industry's demanding landscape, characterised by stringent regulations and immense complexity, make the adoption of AI, big data, and machine learning crucial for its future," Mike adds. "Moving business applications to the cloud, which is where we are focused, is a critical first step in enabling adoption of these technologies."

The company's impact on healthcare is demonstrated in its ongoing partnership with PerfectServe, a provider of healthcare communications solutions focused on streamlining clinical communication. LucidPoint has worked closely with PerfectServe, building on a longstanding relationship with CIO Bob Hackney, to support its migration from traditional data centres into multiple AWS environments.

Scaling with PerfectServe

"They're leveraging the power of the cloud in many ways," says Mike. "Our team of seasoned technology experts has worked in close collaboration to develop their AWS platform. We've also focused on adding resources to help them scale and deliver improvements in their products that really benefit end users.

"One example is around a call forwarding service that PerfectServe offers to help patients contact doctors and healthcare professionals for advice," adds Mike. "They wanted to explore Agentic AI as a way to scale this and offer a better service. In close collaboration, we developed an architecture, and built and tested a prototype that was so successful it's been operating since, taking around 60,000 calls a month with a very high success rate. It's been an amazing project that's very scalable, and is a great example of how we work as a close partner with customers to solve key business problems."

The pace of digital transformation means cloud adoption continues to be a priority for organisations in healthcare and beyond. "Everything's moving rapidly, and we're super excited about the advances in technology," says Mike.

"In terms of our relationship with PerfectServe, Bob has a great vision for the organisation and our role is to provide our expertise to help scale and grow so they can ensure world-class healthcare services into the future."

LEARN MORE

Modernising legacy systems: Balancing progress and continuity

Modernising outdated IT systems is an ongoing challenge in healthcare. PerfectServe takes a practical and strategic approach to address it.

"We have a balance for every month, quarter and year of feature-related work," outlines Bob.

About 70% of capacity goes towards advancing products and services, reserving 30-40% for maintaining and modernising systems.

By leveraging cloud service providers that handle much of the routine infrastructure maintenance, PerfectServe's teams can focus on updating applications and integrating cutting-edge technologies such as AI.

The balanced approach helps avoid the accumulation of technical debt and ensures operational continuity, even when PerfectServe innovates.

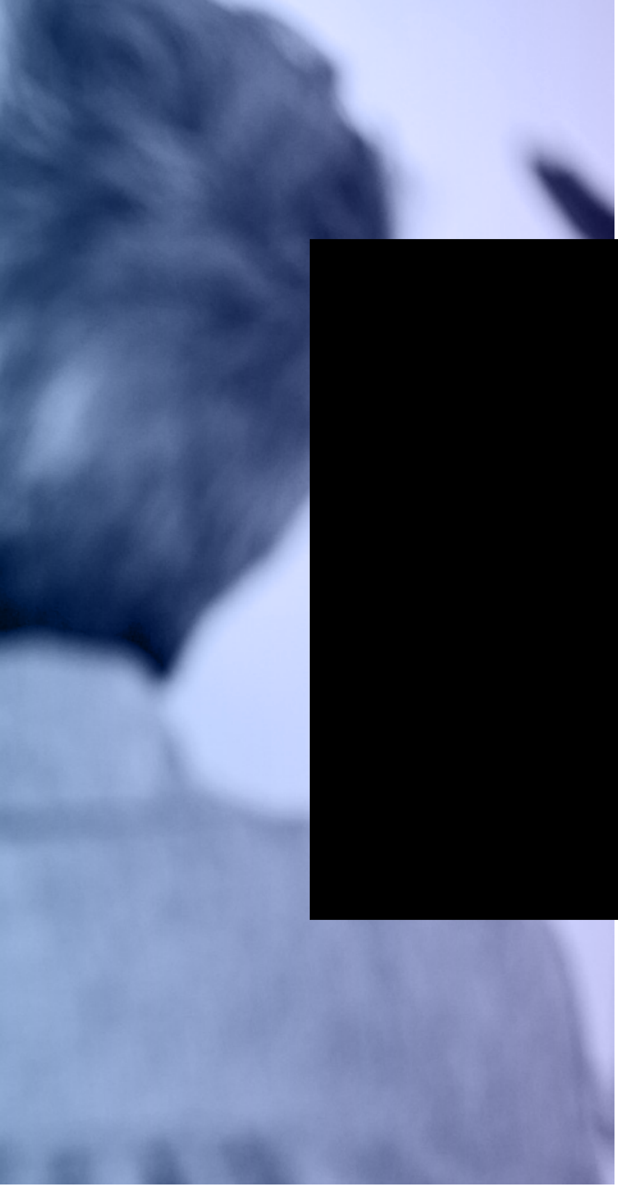
AI's tangible impact: Efficiency, communication and care

PerfectServe's AI strategy is multi-faceted, targeting internal efficiency, enhancing product capabilities and improving patient and caregiver experiences:

1. Internal efficiency

"We're leveraging AI in every way possible to make sure that PerfectServe's people are as efficient as possible," Bob outlines.

Developers use tools like Cursor and AI-powered code assistants to write



“We have a balance for every month, quarter and year of feature-related work”

BOB HACKNEY,
CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER,
PERFECTSERVE

better, more secure code faster. Business and support staff benefit from AI-driven meeting summaries, action items and information retrieval, often through platforms like Microsoft Copilot.

AI agents are treated like digital employees and deployed for repetitive tasks such as password management, freeing human staff for higher-value work.

Bob explains: “We onboard them with capabilities, controls and security parameters. As if we have a repetitive function, an agent will act on it effectively, safely and in a controlled manner.”

2. Enhanced product capabilities

PerfectServe transforms traditional reporting and analytics with conversational AI, allowing users to interact with data through natural dialogue rather than static dashboards.

“We think about that in our reporting to give our customers a conversational interaction versus looking at a dashboard and trying to work with the data that way,” Bob goes on.

Voice IVRs (Interactive Voice Response systems) are being modernised, moving from rigid menu-based systems to conversational AI agents that understand and respond to natural language, significantly improving user experience and efficiency.

3. Improving patient communication and care delivery

AI enables faster, more accurate communication between patients and caregivers, reducing wait times and ensuring that care is delivered promptly and appropriately. By analysing communication patterns and response times, AI helps healthcare organisations optimise resource allocation and improve patient engagement, resulting in a positive experience.

Measuring the business value of AI

PerfectServe takes a rigorous approach to measuring the return on investment from its AI initiatives.

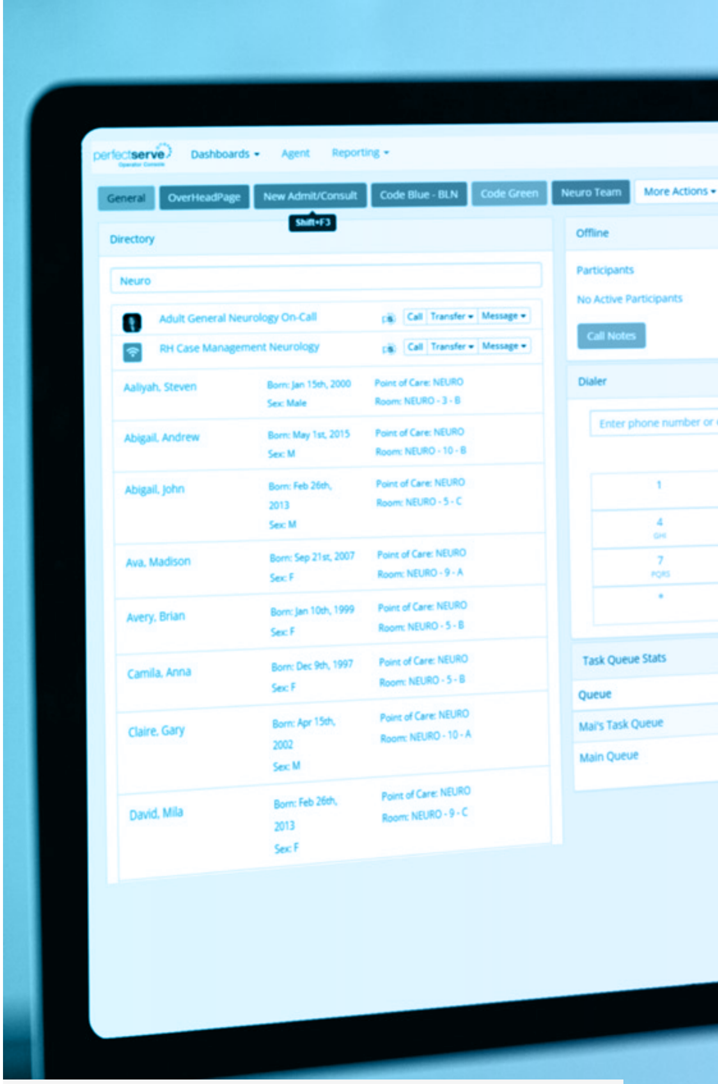
"We're seeing about 25-30% efficiency just by introducing AI tools into developers' daily life," Bob asserts.

AI also accelerates quality assurance. Automated agents continuously run test cases, reducing cycle times from weeks to days or even hours.

For product management and UI/UX development, AI-driven prompt engineering enables one person to accomplish tasks that previously required multiple roles. The process speeds up functional prototype delivery and reduces resource requirements.

Strategic collaboration: Shaping the future together

PerfectServe champions innovation through a robust, three-layered approach to collaboration: external partnerships, internal team engagement and executive peer networks.


perfectserve
Dashboards
Agent
Reporting
General
OverHeadPage
New Admit/Consult
Shift+F3
Code Blue - BLN
Code Green
Neuro Team
More Actions
Directory
Neuro
Adult General Neurology On-Call
RH Case Management Neurology
Call
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No Active Participants
Call Notes
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1
4
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7
PQRS
*
Task Queue Stats
Queue
Mai's Task Queue
Main Queue

Aaliyah, Steven	Born: Jan 15th, 2000 Sex: Male	Point of Care: NEURO Room: NEURO - 3 - B
Abigail, Andrew	Born: May 1st, 2015 Sex: M	Point of Care: NEURO Room: NEURO - 10 - B
Abigail, John	Born: Feb 26th, 2013 Sex: M	Point of Care: NEURO Room: NEURO - 5 - C
Ava, Madison	Born: Sep 21st, 2007 Sex: F	Point of Care: NEURO Room: NEURO - 9 - A
Avery, Brian	Born: Jan 10th, 1999 Sex: F	Point of Care: NEURO Room: NEURO - 5 - B
Camila, Anna	Born: Dec 9th, 1997 Sex: F	Point of Care: NEURO Room: NEURO - 5 - B
Claire, Gary	Born: Apr 15th, 2002 Sex: M	Point of Care: NEURO Room: NEURO - 10 - A
David, Mila	Born: Feb 26th, 2013 Sex: F	Point of Care: NEURO Room: NEURO - 9 - C

70%

proportion of PerfectServe's capacity focused on advancing products and services

External collaboration

PerfectServe actively partners with its strategic customers.

"We want to roll out new functionality," asserts Bob. "We will likely partner with some of our larger strategic customers to understand how they would use that functionality and we will coil it together."

Customers are involved early in the development cycle.

"Our teams build a minimal viable product (MVP), demonstrate it and

Report Call
Mute
Mai Young
Offline
Edit Layout
Notes
Operator Console Support 386 days ago
Callback: 8771234567 Caller Name: Dr. Jones
Dr. Jones disconnected, please transfer to me when he calls back
New Personal Notes
Self Park
Hangup
Parked Calls
My Calls
All Calls
No results found.
Call History
My Calls
All Calls
No results found.
extension
Join/Leave
Waiting
Availability
Eligible

customers then use and interact with it," explains Bob. The process ensures that feature development aligns perfectly with use cases.

PerfectServe hosts summits annually, bringing together key customers.

Bob goes on: "We reveal our roadmaps and conduct interactive sessions, during which customers provide direct feedback on how they use our product and how it meets their specific needs."

> **"We're leveraging AI in every way possible to make sure that PerfectServe's people are as efficient as possible"**
>
> **BOB HACKNEY,**
> CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER,
> PERFECTSERVE

Internal engagement

Internally, PerfectServe employs a method called RICE (Reach, Impact, Confidence, Effort) with its product management team, which is playfully termed 'buy a feature'.

Bob notes: "We interact with our sales, customer support, implementation and consulting teams."

Peer network learning

Bob actively participates in multiple CIO and CTO leadership forums.

Here, industry leaders exchange ideas, discuss different challenges and learn from each other's successes, as well as their failures.

Bob highlights the value of these 'safe places' where peers can openly share experiences: "Collective learning allows everyone to avoid experiencing failures by understanding the shortcomings of others, which significantly accelerates development cycles."

> "LucidPoint is completely focused on the value we will bring to the business as a collective, not just the technology or the latest exciting, shiny tool"
>
> **BOB HACKNEY,**
> CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER,
> PERFECTSERVE

Forging solid connections: A strategic imperative

In today's rapidly-evolving telecommunications landscape, strategic partnerships are no longer merely beneficial; they are a fundamental imperative for innovation and sustainable growth. As the industry navigates the complexities of 5G rollout, fibre expansion and the burgeoning opportunities of AI, the right collaborations define success.

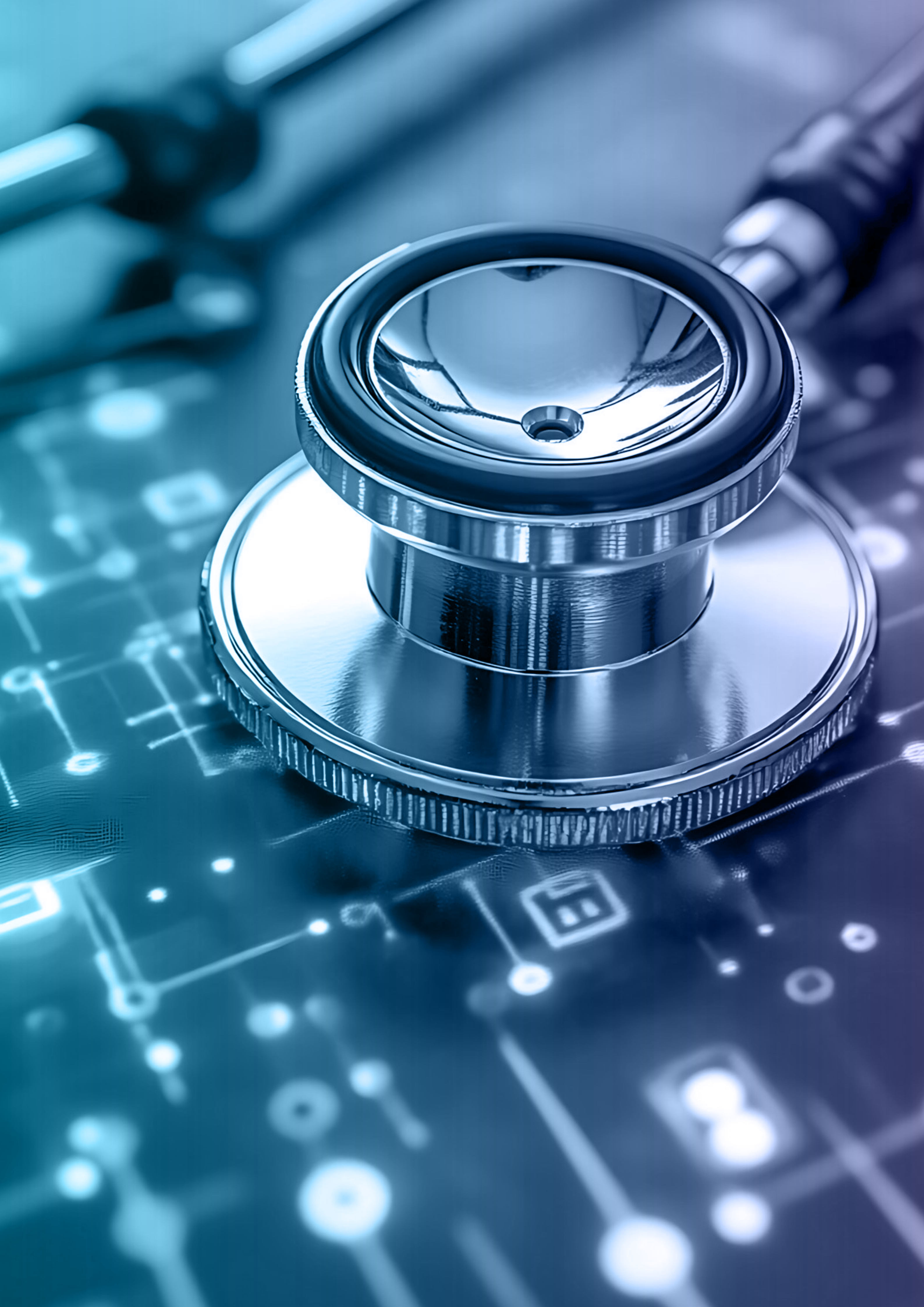
Bob highlights how deep industry understanding forms the bedrock of a successful partnership.

He points out that one of PerfectServe's key partners, LucidPoint, has an inherent grasp of the unique challenges within their unique sector.

"LucidPoint has strong depth in healthcare insight, so they understand why healthcare is different from, say, telecom or fintech," he explains, highlighting the necessity of a partner appreciating the specific nuances of a task at hand, be it healthcare's critical human element, the complex infrastructure or regulatory environment.

Bob champions partners prioritising tangible business value over mere technological flash. A clear line of sight from concept to demonstrable business benefit is imperative.

"LucidPoint is completely focused on the value we will bring to the business as a collective, not just the technology or the latest exciting, shiny tool. They understands that everything we do has to bring value to our customers and our business. So, every project we embark on



24

hours a day during which AI agents can run quality assurance test cases starts from that understanding that the project goes from concept to business value, or it is not a successful engagement."

According to Bob, LucidPoint is a true strategic partner that shares the inherent risks and rewards in a project's outcomes. He firmly asserts this as a non-negotiable criterion: "I won't have a strategic partnership if they don't have some risk in the outcomes. That's a non-starter."

The philosophy fosters a deeper commitment and alignment between organisations, moving beyond a transactional vendor relationship to a true joint venture where both parties invest in mutual success.

Bob outlines his three core criteria for selecting a partner: robust governance, risk and compliance (GRC) adherence; strategic alignment with business values; and, critically, shared risk in the endeavour.

The commitment to shared risk underpins a long-term strategic vision: "It is essential that partners see that those short-term investments produce long-term strategic gains and LucidPoint has demonstrated that time and time again over our relationship."

The enduring partnership and customer-centric ethos is invaluable for building resilient, innovative ecosystems.

Furthermore, Bob outlines how strategic partners proactively adapt and invest in emerging technologies.

He points to LucidPoint's foresight in the rapidly evolving AI landscape: "LucidPoint, like us, are investing in their team in ways that increase efficiency. They saw the same thing we did: there was high value in research and development on using some of these new AI capabilities. They are invested in their employees to learn those skills so that the value can be realised."

Proactive investment in generative AI and conversational AI benefits PerfectServe's customers, allowing them to capitalise on innovations without shouldering the full upfront research and development burden.

> **"We're focusing on improving care through our technology. That's why we're here"**
>
> **BOB HACKNEY,**
> CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER,
> PERFECTSERVE

Looking ahead: The next wave of healthcare transformation

Rapid technological innovation is actively shaping healthcare's future.

Bob's vision is clear: PerfectServe will continue to deliver immense value to healthcare providers and patients by harnessing AI, cloud computing and strategic partnerships.

He concludes: "We're focusing on improving care through our technology. That's the reason why we're here." ○

SCALING SUSTAINABLE APAC DATA CENTRES

WRITTEN BY:
AMBER JACKSON

PRODUCED BY:
LEWIS VAUGHAN

Digital Edge CEO *John Freeman* explains how the company keeps prioritising sustainability as it expands further across the Asia-Pacific data centre market

In a region where data demands continue to grow and infrastructure requirements become increasingly complex, Digital Edge has positioned itself as a provider focused on sustainable expansion across the Asia-Pacific (APAC) data centre market.

The company, which now manages 24 data centres in operation or under development, recently secured a US$1.6bn capital injection that signals confidence in its expansion strategy during a period of changing hyperscale demand.

Having been at the helm as CEO since January 2025, John Freeman explains that environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles have guided the company from its inception in late 2019.

"ESG has been embedded as part of our culture and framework from day one when we formed the company," he says. "It's really been a core pillar for us and drives every decision that we make across the platform and the entire lifecycle of a data centre whether it's site selection, operations, power procurement or water usage."

ESG as the foundation, rather than an afterthought

In his first five months as CEO, John says he has concentrated on institutionalising

JOHN FREEMAN

TITLE: **CEO**

John Freeman is the Chief Executive Officer of Digital Edge, bringing over 29 years of leadership in the data center and TMT sectors. A founding executive and board member since inception, he became Group President in 2024 and CEO in 2025. John has led global teams and strategic transactions across the globe. Prior to Digital Edge, he was Chief Legal and Compliance Officer at Tata Communications, overseeing global legal and regulatory functions. With expertise in cross-border M&A and joint ventures, he has closed over 20 deals, including transactions worth up to US$14 billion, driving transformative growth in complex markets.

ESG principles while preparing the company for substantial growth.

Founded in 2020, Digital Edge provides high-quality colocation and interconnect services across APAC – specifically in China, India, Japan, Indonesia, Philippines and South Korea. It has expanded its workforce quickly from a few co-founders to more than 570 employees and seeks to confront both opportunities and challenges while staying true to its operational philosophy of supporting mission-critical business operations.

In order to achieve this, John says the company structures its sustainability approach around three principles: respect for resources, respect for people and communities and respect for transparency.

"Those core pillars drive everything that we do as an organisation especially across the data centre lifecycle," he explains. "From selecting a site for construction of a new data centre facility, where we want to make sure that data centre has a minimal ecological impact in terms of where we build it to how we design that data centre by making sure that it's the most efficient in terms of power or water efficiency. These principles are embedded in all of our new data centre projects, including NARRA1 in the Philippines and EDGE2 in Indonesia, which have design PUEs of 1.23 and are already fully powered by 100% renewable energy."

This comprehensive approach extends to power procurement, with Digital Edge working closely with utility providers to secure renewable energy sources where available, or by looking at what John refers to as "greener power" alternatives where renewable options remain limited.

> **"What we're designing and building is a flexible, sustainable architecture to allow our customers to deploy into a facility at scale over time"**
>
> **JOHN FREEMAN,**
> **CEO,**
> **DIGITAL EDGE**

As this strategy demonstrates, sustainability considerations have become central to Digital Edge's operational planning, rather than being an offshoot to the side.

John says: "Sustainability is in our culture and embedded in our DNA."

Operating data centres in tropical climates can often present technical challenges for efficiency metrics. Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE)

300 megawatts

Capacity of Digital Edge's campus in India that is supported by innovative grey water technology

> **“It’s about the art of possibility, rather than someone sitting at corporate trying to build a data centre”**
>
> **JOHN FREEMAN,**
> CEO,
> DIGITAL EDGE

– a ratio that measures how much energy a data centre uses for computing versus total energy consumption – can become more difficult to optimise in hot or humid environments.

Despite these challenges, Digital Edge is eager to target a PUE of 1.25 or lower across its new greenfield facilities. For context, a PUE of 1.0 would represent perfect efficiency, with all energy used for computing, while the industry average typically ranges between 1.5-1.8.

“We’ve designed our MEP (mechanical, electrical and plumbing) and cooling technologies to achieve these PUE targets,” John notes. “As our customers begin migrating to rack-level liquid

PEK1
interior
China

1.25 or less

PUE target for all Digital Edge facilities, including those in challenging tropical climates

cooling, we expect to significantly reduce PUE targets even further, building on the fact that our newly developed sites are already operating at PUE efficient level.”

Water usage inevitably represents another environmental consideration, particularly in regions where potable water supplies face pressure. In India, Digital Edge has implemented a grey water technology solution for its 300MW Navi Mumbai campus – a system that reclaims lightly used water that would otherwise be discharged by the local municipality – to mitigate this and reduce consumption of freshwater resources.

“We work with the local water authorities to find the best ways to leverage the use of their grey water,” John explains. “We work with them to recapture grey water and use it as part of our cooling technology by integrating it into our closed loop cooling towers. By doing so, we lessen the impact on potable water in the surrounding community.”

Navigating APAC and its diverse data centre market

The APAC data centre market is booming and as a result presents unique challenges for data centre operators, given its market diversity. John explains that operating conditions, regulations and infrastructure capabilities can differ widely from one market to another.

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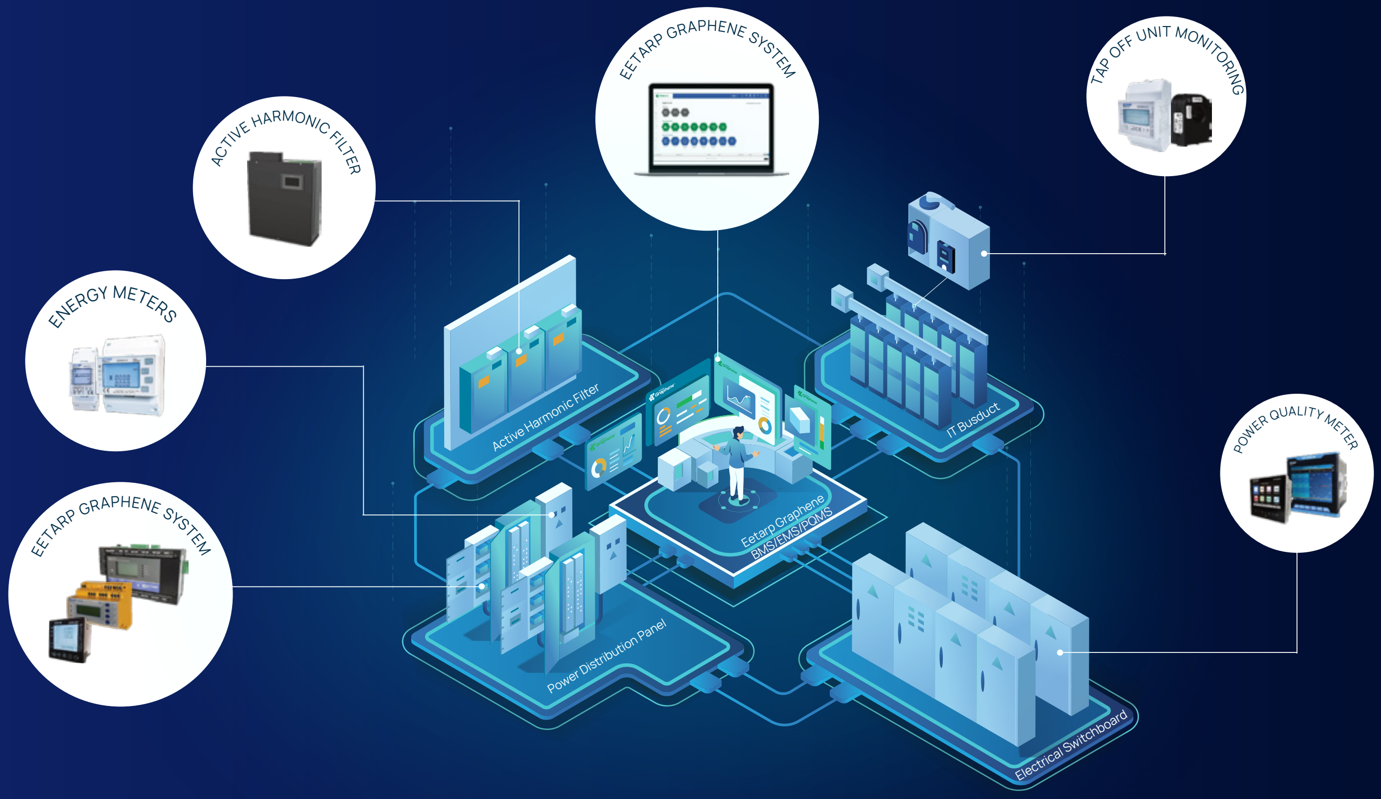
EETARP GRAPHENE SYSTEM
TAP OFF UNIT MONITORING
ACTIVE HARMONIC FILTER
ENERGY METERS
EETARP GRAPHENE SYSTEM
POWER QUALITY METER
Active Harmonic Filter
IT Busduct
Eetarp Graphene
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0|0|0
Digital Edge DC
SEL2

SEL2 interior Korea

"When people refer to Asia, they often think of it as a homogeneous region, but the reality is more nuanced. Operating in Korea isn't the same as operating in the Philippines or India," he explains. "That's why we've built a unified platform that ensures a consistent standard of quality, backed by deep local expertise in each market."

Across APAC, Digital Edge focuses on balancing global standards with local adaptability. While the company maintains central governance over its sites across all aspects of design and build, it delegates the implementation of these frameworks to local teams with expertise in the area.

"Whether it's through our local teams or local partnerships, or vendors and suppliers, that we work with on the ground in a particular market, we do so because they are the ones with the most understanding of what can and can't be done," John says. "It's about the art of possibility, rather than someone sitting at corporate trying to build and operate a data centre in a particular market."

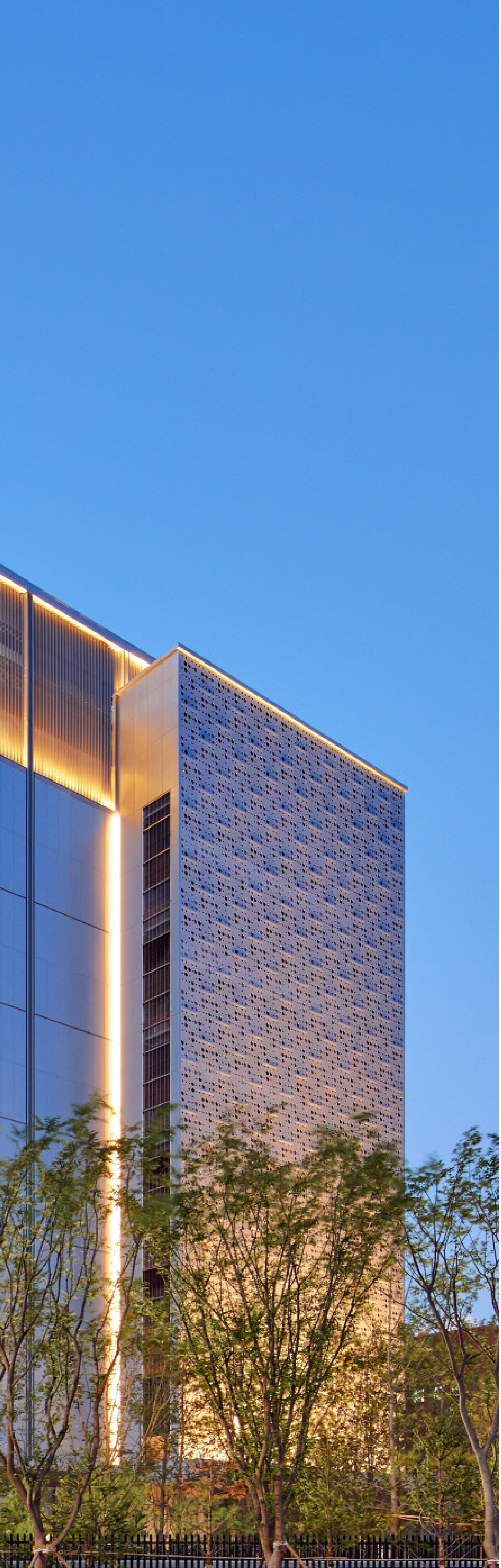
Recognising that local teams possess crucial knowledge about a region's market conditions is what sets Digital Edge apart. By leveraging those critical relationships with local suppliers and vendors, the company aims to navigate local challenges to achieve the best possible operations.

Digital Edge DC

SEL2
exterior
Korea

US$1.6bn

Capital recently secured by Digital Edge to fund its expansion strategy across Asia-Pacific



John adds: “We very much value the local partnerships that we’ve developed in each of the countries in which we operate and we seek to leverage that to the fullest extent.”

Digital Edge is also eager to leverage this local expertise to support its hyperscale customers – those large technology companies that require substantial computing resources.

“The hyperscale customers have very specific requirements, which are usually set either regionally or back at the corporate headquarters,” John says. “We work very closely with the hyperscalers to understand their requirements and then work with our local teams who deliver the project to the standards our hyperscale customers require.”

As our customers don’t always know their full deployment roadmap from day one, Digital Edge is able to leverage its strategy of building adaptable infrastructure that can support various deployment scenarios over time, whether air-cooled or liquid cooling in the future.

John adds: “What we’re designing and building is a flexible, sustainable architecture that allows our customers to deploy into a facility or campus at scale over time.”

The US$1.6bn advantage

The recent US$1.6bn capital injection that Digital Edge closed in January 2025 provides the company with resources to accelerate its expansion strategy. This funding, provided by infrastructure

investment firm Stonepeak, suggests high confidence in the positive direction Digital Edge is going.

"We're proud to have gained the trust of our investors in securing this capital," John tells us. "Stonepeak is a great shareholder and partner and this additional capital is a validation of our strategy and our teams' ability to execute."

Looking ahead, Digital Edge plans to deploy this capital over the next 12-18 months, with two primary focus areas. First, the company intends to expand its presence in existing markets to support the growing demands from its customers. Second, it aims to enter several new markets to complete its regional footprint and support its customers expansion plans.

"We started this platform as an APAC platform provider, supporting our customers and the digital economy in these markets. As we grow, we will continue to focus on Asia, adding some new markets to complete our digital footprint in the region," John says.

"This capital also gives us more flexibility in terms of deploying new technologies. We'll continue to look at the latest technologies from a sustainability standpoint and leverage these technologies in order minimise our impact on the environment in which we operate."

In order to achieve sustainable growth, Digital Edge has partnered with Eetarp, a provider of building management systems and energy monitoring solutions.

The partnership is part of Digital Edge's pledge to extend its environmental strategy to its supply chain relationship. It has led to the implementation of integrated building management systems in Jakarta, Indonesia and power metering solutions in a new 36-megawatt data centre in Seoul, South Korea.

"Our partnership with Eetarp exemplifies how we collaborate with our supply chain to achieve our sustainability metrics and our gold standard operational standards across the platform," John says.

NARRA1 electrical
UPS Philippines

> “We very much value the local partnerships that we’ve developed in each of the countries in which we operate”
>
> **JOHN FREEMAN,**
> CEO,
> DIGITAL EDGE

“We integrate their technologies into our platform and we will continue to look to partner with them, particularly as we continue to scale across the APAC region.”

How Digital Edge hopes to confront future data demand

The APAC data centre market is quickly closing the gap, driven by AI and machine learning adoption, with global technology firms continuing to invest and build

EDGE2
exterior
Indonesia

new facilities across the region. What's clear is that the potential for growth is only continuing to rise.

"In APAC, I think we're in the early innings," John says. "The US is more advanced when it comes to AI deployments, but – given the scarcity of supply in the US – a lot of hyperscalers and AI companies are starting to look to deploy in Asia. So we envision exponential growth in the next few years."

John references some of the major players as examples, who pulled back from new data centre investments earlier in the year.

"We're mindful of that and believe this is a short-term market adjustment," he explains. "To address this uncertainty, I think any service provider, including Digital Edge, needs to be flexible on how they design their data centres when building on spec. We need to design our buildings to cater to 80% and adjust the remaining 20% to satisfy a particular customer's requirements near real time.

"We need to make sure that our facilities and infrastructure are able to flex depending on who requires that capacity today as well as tomorrow."

With its funding secured and clear sustainability frameworks, Digital Edge intends to expand its business significantly within the next two years.

"We have 24 data centres, either in operations or currently under development," John says. "We're going to substantially scale our platform over the next 24 months – with a view to keep supporting our customers as they grow their business across APAC."

Using AI to A
Competitive

Accelerate
Sport

WRITTEN BY:
KITTY
WHEELER

PRODUCED BY:
TOM
VENTURO

loanDepot park

The **Miami Marlins** are pioneering the use of AI and ML in Major League Baseball, improving player performance, fan engagement and business success

The AI industry hears a lot about how AI is accelerating business competition, operations and people's every day tasks – but perhaps the most entertaining and exciting application of AI innovation is in the sports sector.

Miami Marlins, the two time World Series winning Major League Baseball team, are deploying AI and machine learning (ML) technologies across their baseball operations.

From player performance analysis to fan experience optimisation, the Marlins are using AI as part of an organisational rebuild aimed at bringing a World Series championship back to South Florida.

This rebuild is key to the Marlins' journey in creating a winning culture and team from the ground up, both on the player's side and in the front office.

This technology-led rebuild began with a strategic front office transformation aimed at creating long-term competitive advantages through data.

Leading this development is Brian Chase, Vice President of Baseball Systems, who joined the organisation as part of this transformation for the 2025 season as part of a broader front

office transformation designed to create sustainable competitive advantages through data-driven decision making.

He is now focused on AI to enhance how the team works together to win.

The Marlins utilise AI and technology "in almost everything we do on the baseball side," he says.

"Every day, our mission at the Marlins is simple: get better players and get players better.

"We use data from every pitch, swing and play to understand who our players are today – and who they could become tomorrow."

The impact of AI in video analysis to power player technique

At loanDepot park in Miami and The Marlins' Minor League facilities in Florida, Wisconsin and the Dominican Republic, the Marlins employ vendors including Hawkeye, KinaTrax and Trackman to capture high frame rate video footage during every home game.

These systems track all on-field activity, including player movements, batting mechanics and pitching deliveries – generating comprehensive datasets that feed into the organisation's analytical infrastructure.

What's impressive about the high frame rate technology, is that it enables the capture of granular performance data that traditional observation methods cannot provide.

This information is processed through internal database systems and transformed using ML models to generate actionable insights or coaching staff and player development personnel.

Brian explains that the organisation has established "constant feedback loops with coaches, players and staff to give them real time information that they can use to help make better decisions."

> **"Take a single player today, who could already be on the Major League roster, one of our Minor League rosters or someone that we are looking into drafting – we have to find ways to accurately predict how good they could be in the coming years"**
>
> **BRIAN CHASE,**
> VP OF BASEBALL SYSTEMS,
> MIAMI MARLINS

BRIAN CHASE

TITLE: **VP OF BASEBALL SYSTEMS**

Brian Chase leads the Miami Marlins' AI transformation as Vice President of Baseball Systems. He oversees data engineering, software development, ML and product development initiatives.

Joining the organisation in 2025 as part of a strategic front office rebuild, Brian spearheads the integration of AI across all baseball operations – from real-time player performance analysis to long-term predictive modeling for roster construction.

His approach emphasises making advanced AI outputs actionable for end users, bridging traditional domain expertise with cutting-edge analytics.

He also manages partnerships with over 40 technology vendors and champions sustainable AI system development that delivers measurable competitive advantages in professional sports.

Furthermore, the technology infrastructure supports the franchise's ultimate objective of winning baseball games whilst developing players more effectively than conventional methods alone.

Now, the Marlins focus extensively on making analytical outputs accessible and actionable for players and coaches.

"While we utilise AI on top of our advanced datasets and analytics to come to these conclusions, if we can't turn those insights into something clear and actionable for a player or a coach, it's going to be extremely hard for them to integrate those insights into their daily routines," Brian notes.

Gen AI's role in enhancing scouting and reporting

The organisation particularly employs Gen AI tools to assist coaching staff and scouts in producing detailed reports and analytical content.

From Gen AI, scouts observing tryouts at the Marlins' Dominican Republic facility can utilise AI-powered systems to document player performance during drills, simulated games and practice sessions.

These AI-generated reports serve as inputs for traditional ML and data science activities conducted internally – and the approach combines qualitative expertise from experienced

baseball personnel with quantitative analysis from data scientists and research analysts.

Brian describes the methodology as bridging "the qualitative and the quantitative to make really informative decisions."

This means that from AI's capabilities, the Marlins have cultivated a culture that values both traditional baseball knowledge and advanced analytics, with coaching staff and player development personnel actively seeking data-driven insights to enhance their effectiveness.

> **"We use data from every pitch, swing and play to understand who our players are today – and who they could become tomorrow"**
>
> BRIAN CHASE,
> VP OF BASEBALL SYSTEMS,
> MIAMI MARLINS

How AI is accelerating predictive modelling for player evaluation

The Marlins additionally employ supervised learning techniques to identify factors that correlate most strongly with player performance.

Data scientists within the organisation build predictive models designed to forecast player development trajectories over three to five year periods, informing decisions about team construction, free agency acquisitions and trade opportunities.

Data science teams should be able to move quickly.

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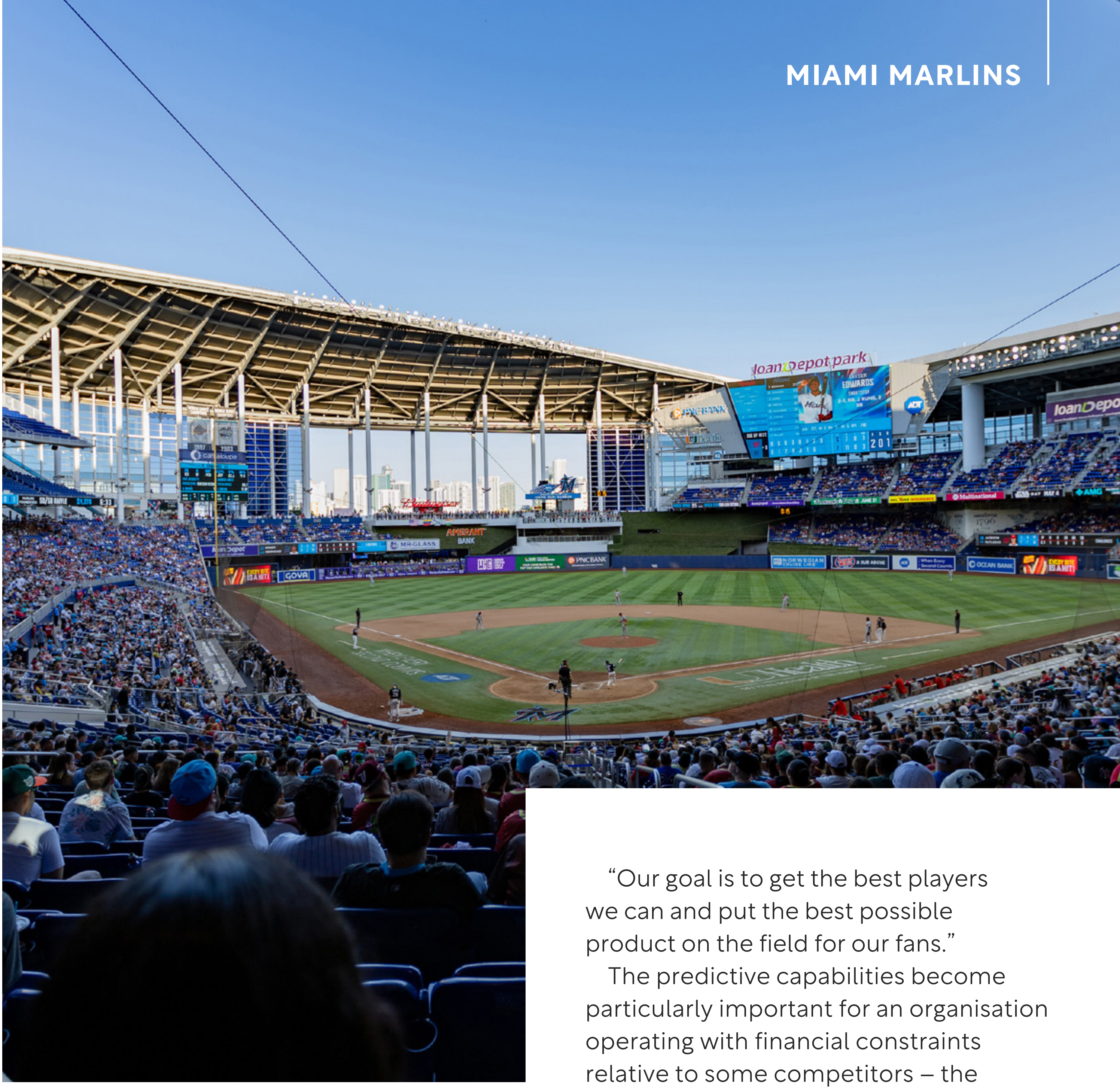


Brian explains that these models help the organisation answer critical questions: "If we acquire, sign or draft a particular player today, how confident and to what degree can we predict that they will become a key contributor for the team in the future?

"The combination of these projects along with qualitative analysis on player video and live practices, helps us with everything from team construction and free agency decisions to drafting future Marlins.

"Our goal is to get the best players we can and put the best possible product on the field for our fans."

The predictive capabilities become particularly important for an organisation operating with financial constraints relative to some competitors – the Marlins must maximise the value of their player investments through superior evaluation and development processes rather than simply outspending rival franchises.

The Marlins' technology partnership strategy

The Marlins work with more than 40 technology vendors to support their baseball operations, particular standouts being Google Cloud and Posit.

Beyond the tracking systems used during games, the organisation leverages Google Cloud services.

This infrastructure supports the platforming and productionalisation of data collected from various sources, as well as the modeling activities and internal applications used across baseball operations.

Additionally, the franchise has developed a particularly close relationship with Posit, which provides AI and ML platform capabilities.

The Marlins use Posit Connect to scale pre-game and post-game reports used across baseball operations whilst building customised applications for players and coaches.

“Posit has been a game-changer for us,” says Brian.

“We use Posit Connect to scale our pre- and post-game reporting and deliver insights directly to staff and players. It’s become an essential part of our operations.”

The team also use Posit Package Manager to manage their internal R and Python libraries, ensuring consistent deployment of models and analyses across departments.

“The ability to prototype, deploy and scale applications quickly has made a huge impact on our workflows,” Brian adds.

AI being used to enhance fan experience

Whilst player development is the primary focus of the Marlins’ AI initiatives, the organisation also recognises significant opportunities to apply similar technologies to business operations and fan enjoyment.

The Marlins maintain a business analytics division tasked with understanding fan preferences and optimising the customer experience.

Potential applications include enhanced security systems to expedite stadium entry, dynamic pricing models for tickets and concessions and predictive analytics for fan attendance and customer lifetime value calculations.

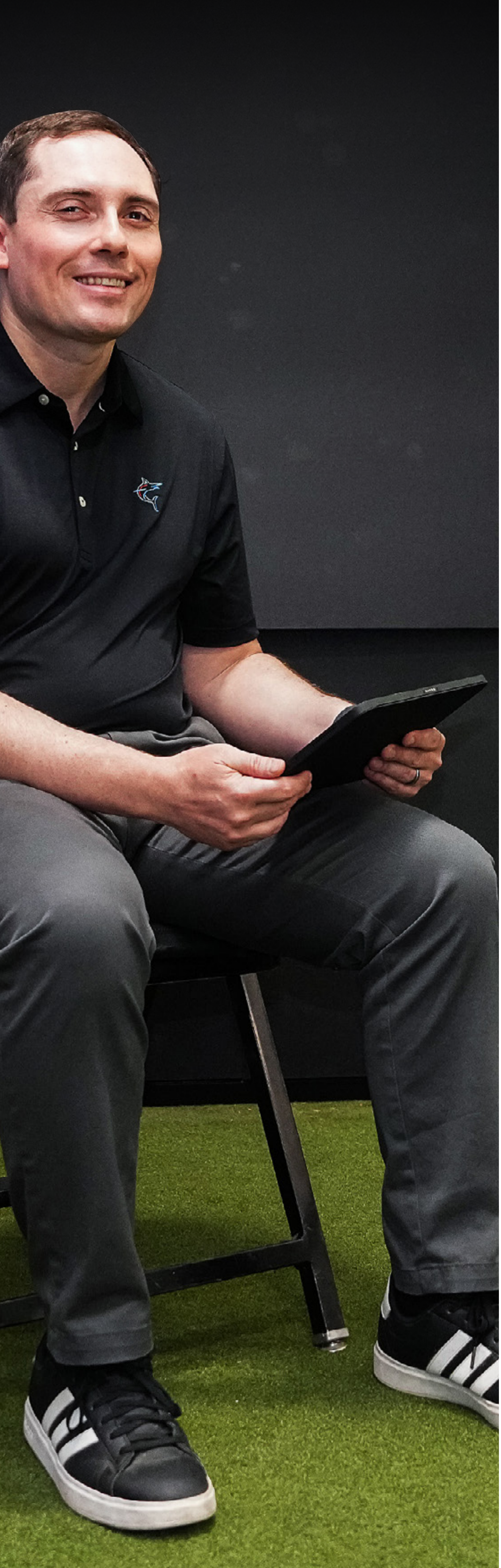
"We see an opportunity to commercialise some of our baseball data into fan-facing stats and tools," says Brian.

"It's about helping fans feel more connected to what's happening on the field."

The data integration and infrastructure challenges

Whilst AI has taken the team's performance to new heights, the proliferation of data sources across professional sports creates both opportunities and challenges for organisations seeking to implement comprehensive AI strategies.

> **"Every day, our mission at the Marlins is simple: get better players and get players better"**
>
> BRIAN CHASE,
> VP OF BASEBALL SYSTEMS,
> MIAMI MARLINS



THE KEY WAYS AI IS ACCELERATING THE MIAMI MARLINS:

- Real-time player performance analysis using AI-driven video and tracking data
- Gen AI enhancing scouting and reporting for better talent evaluation
- Predictive models forecasting player development and informing team decisions
- Data integration from 40+ tech partners, including Google Cloud and Posit
- AI-powered business analytics optimising fan experience and stadium operations
- Unified data sources enabling continuous improvement and competitive advantage

One such challenge is that the Marlins must integrate information from traditional tracking systems with biomechanical data from wearables and qualitative assessments from scouts and coaches.

Brian describes this as “bringing all these disparate data sets together to streamline our inputs to our AI activities.”

As a result, the organisation combines quantitative analysis with qualitative insights from baseball personnel to create what he terms "a 360 degree loop of building out models, seeing how much correlation there is for certain variables within those models and seeing how real life events play out – and the cycle continues."

This iterative approach treats each practice session and game as an experimental opportunity to refine predictive models and validate analytical conclusions against real-world outcomes.

The future potential of AI for competitive advantage

As AI capabilities continue advancing, Brian anticipates significant opportunities for sports organisations to develop unique competitive advantages through technology implementation.

The convergence of increasing data availability, improved analytical tools and growing acceptance of technology-driven insights alone creates conditions for sustained innovation in player development and team operations.

> “Our goal is to get the best players we can and put the best possible product on the field for our fans”
>
> **BRIAN CHASE,**
> VP OF BASEBALL SYSTEMS,
> MIAMI MARLINS

Therefore, the Marlins view their current technological investments as foundational elements of a long-term strategy to compete effectively despite financial constraints.

“MLB teams are all competing at the end of the day, and the goal for the Marlins each day is to go out and beat that other team across from us on the field and provide an entertaining product for our fans,” Brian says.

It seems that part of what makes the Marlins unique is their approach

> **“From a technological point of view, we are really working to build long-term sustainable systems that we can use for getting the most insights and analysis out of our data”**
>
> **BRIAN CHASE,**
> VP OF BASEBALL SYSTEMS,
> MIAMI MARLINS

emphasising sustainable system development that can support decision-making processes across multiple seasons and player development cycles.

Over the next 12 to 18 months, the Marlins plan to continue building technological infrastructure designed to maximise insights and analysis capabilities.

“From a technological point of view, we are really working to build long-term sustainable systems that we can use for getting the most insights and analysis out of our data,” Brian concludes.

“This will help us make the best possible decisions to bring the best players to the field and also provide a winning culture and an environment to help us bring a third World Series championship to South Florida.” ○

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